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APRIL 1993

WIZARD™

No. 20

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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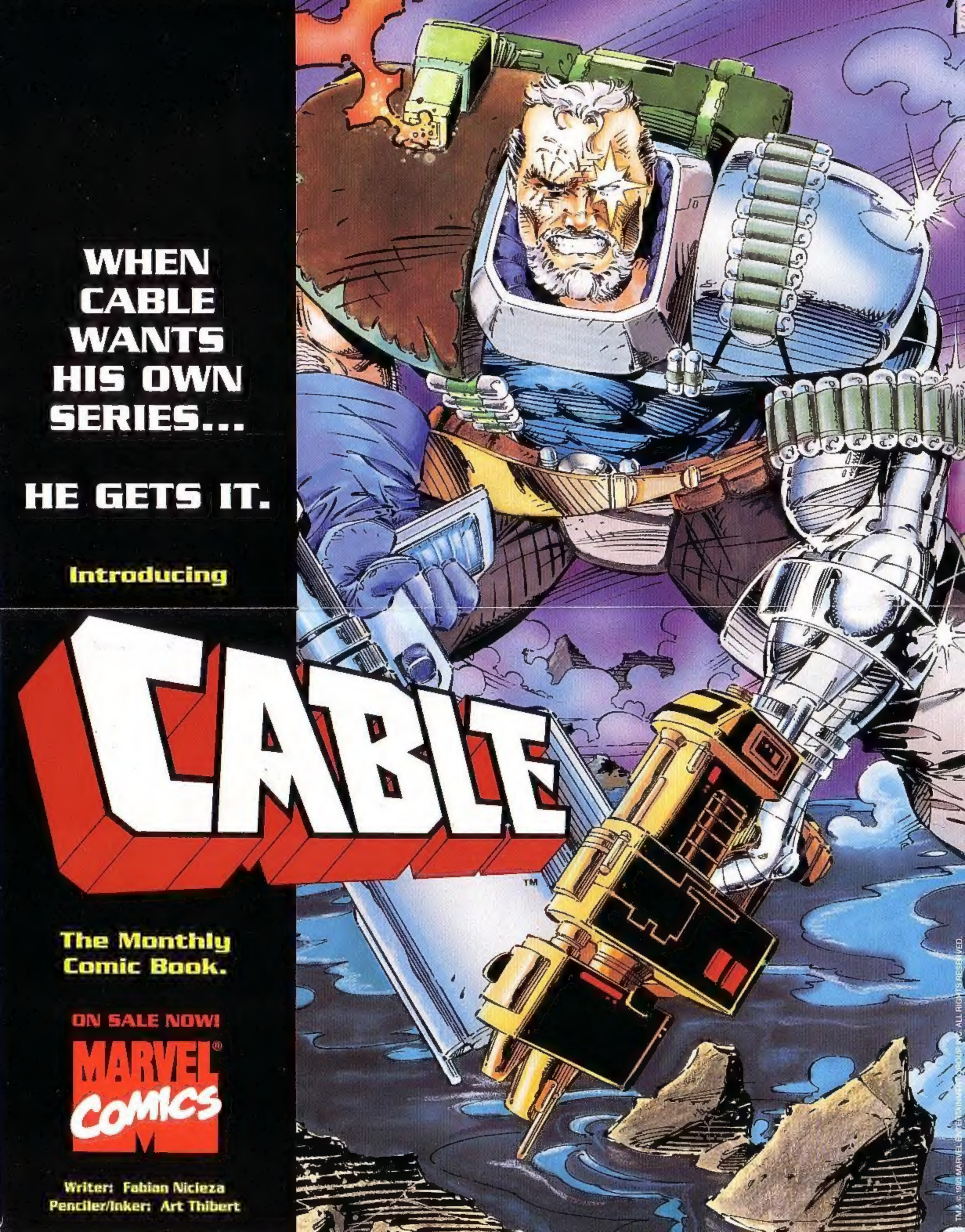
APRIL 1993

WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 20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A LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

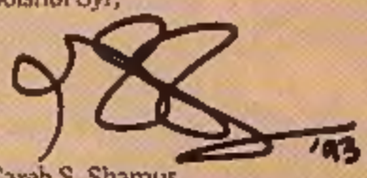
Really?

Here I thought I could relax a bit once *Wizard* made it to the top. Man, was I off-base. Aside from the grueling schedule necessary to keep *Wizard* on top of the game, we're now up and running with a really healthy schedule concerning the various specials we have cooking (*The 100 Most Collectible Comics* had a really favorable reaction from the fans, and the special we have planned paying tribute to the Man of Steel is shaping up really sweet). On top of that we're teaming up with this issue's cover artist, Sam Kieth, to produce *The Maxx* #1/2, an all-new comic book that we'll go in depth about in next issue. Top that off with Progard, our new line of comic collecting supplies that we produce in conjunction with Enor, and two other major projects that I can't really spill the beans about yet, and you have a workload that even Fabian Nicieza would be leery of. Sheesh, when do I get to retreat to some tropical island and live like Marlon Brando?

In other news, the "Does Wizard Suck?" survey we ran in issue #18 of the magazine has met with incredible response from you guys, and frankly, I'm surprised at some of the results we've gotten. A lot of the features that I thought were popular got a thumbs down, while many of the features that I felt were somewhat lacking have received tremendous fan support. The results of the poll, as well as some of the changes that will come about because of them, will appear in a future issue.

In closing, just let me stress the fact that our commitment to quality and our goal of being the most informative, dependable and entertaining guide in this field is solid, and though at times we fumble the ball (check out the Market Watch to see what the hell I'm talking about), everything we do has your best interests at heart. Okay, that's it. I've held you up long enough...go read the rest of the book and drop me a line with what you think. And as always, thanks for reading.

Bolshoi Syr,



Gareb S. Shamus

WIZARD

CONTENTS
NUMBER
20

Vol
Num
Ap

Julia ™ & © 1993 Sam Kieth

COVER BABE

Wow. Thanks to Sam Kieth for showing off his exceptional talents for this issue's cover! For the latest Sam's been up to, along with the rest of the Image gang, check out page 55!

Daredevil and Ultron's Head ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

PAGE

18 **At The Controls**
The latest news from the video game world.

33 **Hollywood Heroes**
It's about time: the Fantastic Four movie!

27 **Brutes & Babes**
How to draw comics the right way.

40 **Four-Color Culture**
The role of minorities in comics.

44 **Marking Milestones**
Diversifying the culture in comics.

52 **Silver & Gold**
The way comics used to be.

55 **Darker Image**
Superheroes your mother warned you about.

70 **Foiled Again**
Why comics have to glow in the dark.

74 **Keeping It In The Family**
A talk with the second-generation Romita.

© Marvel Comics

WIN

AUTOGRAPHED GOLD-FOIL WILDC.A.T.S #1! SEE PAGE 92!

DEPARTMENTS

	PAGE
Wizard News — You heard it straight from the cow's mouth!	8
Palmer's Picks — Scott McCloud and his *Zot!*	14
Writing At The Edge — Why Dave's head looks like a balloon.	16
16-Bit Power — How to score with a princess.	22
Amazing Art — The best you little kiddies can do.	80
My Kind of Hero — Actually, it's your kind of hero.	84
Wizard's Realm — The latest adventures of Prince Hal.	88
Toying Around — Bet you've never seen the Ghost Rider figure!	90
Contest #20 — You may win something!	92
C.B.I.Q. — Test your knowledge, smart guy.	94
Intro to Price Guide — What you need to know to read our guide.	121
Magic Words — What you, the fans, have to say.	185
Show Calendar — Get off your butt and get out of the house!	191

Ever play *Prince of Persia*, one of the best games of the year? Check it out on page 22!

KEEP UP

WITH THE LATEST...

Trends

Comic Watch
Betcha didn't realize these two books were this hot. page 104

Crystal Ball
What's coming up in the future? Watch out! page 106

Top 100
You bought 'em last month, and so did everyone else! page 115

Top 10
Whoa! Somebody get Valiant outta my face already! page 116

Market Watch
Them prices go up and down, and here's why. page 118

RELEASES

Picks From The Wizard's Hat
Well, it's about time Spider-Man got another book! page 108

Number 1s
Showing all the new titles coming out this March. page 114

PRICES

Wizard of Cards
Stephen Shamus takes a look at some cardboard. page 98

Comic Book Price Guide
Zoom into the latest numbers with America's #1 guide. page 124

THE ED.

"Understanding Comics." Seems like a simple idea, right? Comics are pictures and words telling a story, right? Well, maybe—and maybe something more.

That's the premise behind Scott McCloud's forthcoming book from Tundra Press, Understanding Comics (see Palmer's Picks, pg. 14 for more). Scott sent me a preview copy to read and I later had a fascinating phone conversation with the Zot! creator about comics and how to define them.

I don't do it often (if ever) here in Wizard, but I spend a certain amount of time reviewing comics, notably on the Genie computer network. One of the consistent problems for those who try to review comics seriously is the lack of a common vocabulary, common esthetics. Film reviewers can speak of film noir, the New Wave, and German expressionism and all their readers and colleagues know what's being discussed. Same is true for terms of art in music and theater reviews.

Because of a lack of serious academic study, comics still lack such a common set of terms. McCloud's book, and the earlier Comics and Sequential Art by Will Eisner, make a start at giving us this vocabulary.

OK, so a common vocabulary will be useful to those of us like me, who review comics the way others review film, books, and music.

Why should you care? Especially, why should you care enough to lay out the dough to buy Understanding Comics when it comes out?

Well, look at it this way: Wouldn't it be cool if your teachers could appreciate comics as much as you do...and you didn't have to explain everything about them? Wouldn't it be cool if the New York Times could cover graphic novels in its Book Review every week, without putting out the vibes that they are somewhat beneath the "Gray Lady's" notice?

I don't agree with all of Scott McCloud's theories about comics. In particular, I think his definition is a little over-broad and leaves out some things I think are part of the essence of comics, such as narrative structure. But that's all beside the point: The fact that he has put his theories on paper gives us a starting place to discuss our differences intelligently.

Intelligent discussion about comics...what a concept!

Pat O'Neill

Patrick Daniel O'Neill, Contributing Editor

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

TV personality keeps sandwiches fresh. "You gotta know where to stash 'em!" claims star.

Hideous creature invades Los Angeles. "It's just a guy in a suit," says National Guard.

© DC COMICS

Superman sighted at K-Mart. "I thought he was dead... and white," says local shopper.

Wizard News

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Wizard #20 April 1993

Valiant/Image X-Over

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Publishing giants Valiant and Image collaborate on what looks to be the biggest comic-book event of 1993.

This summer, Valiant and Image will join forces for a cooperative effort called *Deathmate*. Image's Void meets Valiant's Solar personna (you saw him split in *Rai* #0). The Solar half causes a meeting of the two universes, where both Image's and Valiant's heroes exist! Both companies will handle two books to provide a balanced mix of their collective heroes. Coming in June will be a prologue book ($2.95), which will set up the four issue crossover. The prologue will be written by Bob Layton, with Barry Windsor-Smith and Rob Liefeld pencilling and Jim Lee and Layton inking (not to mention a Jim Lee cover). The four books ($4.95 ea), to be released bi-weekly starting July 1, will be 48 pages, with foil-enhanced, color-coded covers. They'll be followed by an epilogue book in September, ($2.95) written by Bob Layton with pencills by Marc Silvestri and Bart Sears, inks by Scott Williams and Layton (cover by Bart Sears/Marc Silvestri). For every 50 books ordered, retailers will recieve one free special book—if it's a hologram or gold logo hasn't been decided yet. Plans are to advertise this project through MTV and the Sci-Fi Channel. The companies are also organizing a bus trip, where the artists and writers will tour comic shops across the country. Who could ask for anything more?

Marvel: 1993

It's time once again for Mighty Marvel's peek into their plans for 1993—lots of new and

interesting things to keep your eyes and wallet out for. *Avengers* #366 will see the Avengers and X-Men team-up. (OK, so not everything is new.) They attempt to rescue Luna from Magneto's Acolytes. It'll have a nice gold-foil cover. Then for more Avengers action, check out the *Avengers* limited series. Terminatrix continues to try to take over Kang's empire, and she finds herself having to deal with Immortus. When Kang's Anachronauts join her, the Avengers really have their collective hands full! Then in the *Thor* limited series, Dargo (the future Thor), teams up with Beta Ray Bill and Thunderstrike, to take on the evil villain Demon Staff. It looks like Wonder Man will go bad after he finds out the Grim Reaper has his soul trapped in hell. Wonder Man makes deal with Mephisto to do his dirty work. Woodey also gets a new costume!

Clive Barker's new series, *Hokum & Hex*, stars a stand-up comedian named Trip Munroe, whose life is going right in the dumpster. His fiancee is leaving him, he's broke and unfunny, and then he gets super powers.

In *Hyperkind*, an alien bestows some pretty impressive powers upon a group of losers. But what will a recovering drug addict, a spoiled brat, a street punk, and a jock do with them? *Saint Sinner* is the tale of a man possessed by two spirits, one good, one evil. Together they form Saint Sinner, patron saint of lost souls.

A new *Daredevil* limited series is due out which retells DD's origin, has Elektra and Stick, as well as never-before-seen material. Done by none other than Frank Miller (!) and John Romita Jr.

The Infinity saga continues in the *Infinity Crusade* as many of Marvel's mightiest heroes team with the Goddess, Adam Warlock's good manifestation, to try to rid the world of evil. In the end though, it's not what they bargained for! *Warlock Chronicles* is a new series which ties in with the *Infinity Crusade* and deals with the tales of Adam Warlock and his travels to other dimensions.

In the *Marvel Swimsuit Special*, you don't get too much in the line of clothing, but who was looking for clothes?

Death is rampant in *Midnight Sons*! Blade gets hold of a page from the Darkhold. He now has the power to destroy supernatural beings and steal their energy. Some heavy hitters will die trying to retrieve the page! The consequences are felt in other titles, like *Nightstalkers*, *Ghost Rider*, *Darkhold*, *Morbius*, and *Spirits Of Vengeance*. *Midnight Sons Unlimited* is born to give death-loving readers some more Marvel Morbid material. Dig in.

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Eric Masterson gets his own ongoing series, Thunderstrike, *while the rest of the Marvel Universe experiences* The Infinity Crusade.

Punisher, Punisher, Punisher. He's gonna run out of things to blow up! But not this summer. Look for the *Punisher Summer Special* with 48 pages and no advertisements! It's worth it just to see that! More *Punisher Armory* featuring never-before-seen vehicles, gear and guns. Plus the *Punisher After School Special*, where the Big P is put through his paces by writers Mike Lackey, Steve Grant, Roger Salick, and Chuck Dixon. Micro Chip fans won't want to miss the *Punisher: Origin of Micro Chip* one shot, which boasts not only a look at the Punisher's right hand man, but plenty of action, Punisher style!

Lethal Foes of Spider-Man deals with Doc Ock and his plans for revenge against the Webhead. Including such fan-faves as Rhino, Beetle, Answer, Swarm, and more! The *Prowler* limited series is sure to raise eyebrows, with a special appearance by Spider-Man. The Puma struggles to reclaim his humanity in his own limited series.

X-Men 2099—yet another 2099 title featuring those kids no one seems to tire of, the X-Men. In the future the persecution of mutants is worse, and the X-people-to-be must fight for their rights, and their lives. X-Men, we couldn't forget them, not with all the X-stuff out there. However in all the X-books, *X-Men*, *X-Force*, and *X-Factor*, the big storyline is the return of Magneto. Surprised? Didn't think so. In the solo-mutant corner, Wolverine gets a pull from the dream world and goes against Nightmare in a new *Wolverine* limited series. Sabretooth, not to be outdone, will star in his own limited series. When he decides to investigate who hired the Marauders to kill the Morlocks way back when, Wolverine guest-stars and they form an uneasy alliance. Together...they sell. Mutant one-shots abound too: *Xavier Files* provides insights of Marvel's best-known telepath; *X-Men Survival Guide to The Mansion* is a spiral-bound "handbook" that the X-Men supposedly use, with blueprints for the Danger Room, the Blackbird, Cerebro, and more; *X-Men Unlimited* (ain't that the truth! Whew!) will continue as Magneto is a wanted man. Revelations as to why Magneto is so cold and evil are offered. *Deadpool* limited series stars Clint Ea...no that's not right... Deals with the death of Tolliver and people trying to claim his estate. Deadpool must stand in their way. New villains like Slayback show up to take a piece of Deadpool, as do well-knowns, like Juggernaut and Black Tom Cassidy. Needless to say, things get out of hand. And there you have it, kids.

Valiant Planning

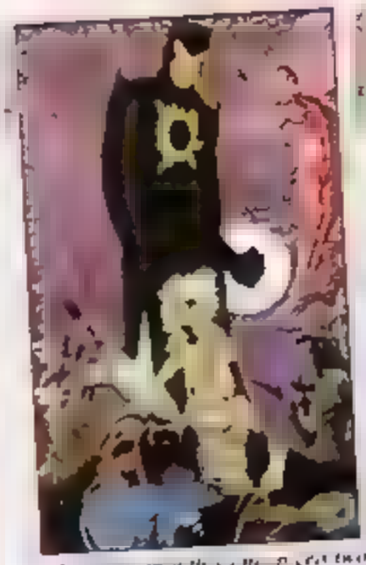
Valiant Comics, not to be left out of the yearly planner thing, have released their 1993 agenda. Archer & Armstrong will keep bouncing around, now in Europe, looking for Armstrong's pouch. Armstrong falls to the influence of one of Master Darque's minions, and is ordered to kill his brother Gilad, the Eternal Warrior!

Bloodshot searches for his past, but he doesn't like what he finds. His war against the mob escalates, and Gilad steps in to help cool things down. Bloodshot heads to England, where he meets up with Neville, Gil's "solicitor." Bloodshot takes Gil's place in Neville's organization, and Bloodshot's importance increases globally!

Speaking of *Eternal Warrior*, Gilad returns home after defeating Master Darque, to find Jessica dying. He fulfills her last request, to retrieve a family heirloom taken by the Nazis. Gil tries to get on with his life but Caldone, the Immortal Enemy, returns to take his revenge. He possesses Gil's body, and becomes the Eternal Enemy! The title of the book will even change for two issues!

In *Harbinger* the kids start scouring the globe for more harbingers to combat Harada. An ex-Eggbreaker named Screen gets involved with the group but has devious plans for them up his sleeve. When they return home, they stumble across a Harbinger Foundation outpost, and run into Caliph, a super-powered mercenary hired to rescue the daughter of a foreign diplomat, supposedly brainwashed by Harada. Sting and this girl are captured by Caliph, but an unexpected appearance by the Eggbreakers allows Sting and the girl to escape. The others turn to Screen to find Sting and are forced to help him.

The H.A.R.D.Corps must face the spider alien's nest in Oregon, then try to stop Harada. Maybe Hotshot, the first female



Valiant's monthly series will feature two new characters, with the premiere issue of Secret Weapons and Dice of Mirage

agent of H.A.R.D.Corps, can help.

Magnus has his hands full helping Marcy and in issue #25 Magnus dons his new battle armor and we witness the resurrection of H.A.R.D as a birth. After that issue a retrospective will begin as various story arcs of Magnus and his adventures. In #27 the story moves on again and ties in with *Rai and the Future Force*.

Shadowman leaves New Orleans for a tour of jazz clubs around the country, he faces racial intolerance and comes upon an ancient power lurking beneath the Great Plains. Steven Grant (Marvel) Tyler will make a guest appearance.

Solar, Man Of The Atom sees his relationship with Gravitar falling apart, and Phil is vulnerable, and Master Darque doesn't miss his chance. Solar splits himself in two. One half goes to fight the spider aliens, the other on Earth finds himself unable to deal with Master Darque's newest creation, Dr. Eclipse.

X-O Manowar must outwit the government when they discover the truth behind Orb Industries and the X-Clamor. Randy becomes X-O for a time after being approached by federal agents, but Aric must bail her out.

In the new series *Secret Weapons*, various heroes and villains in the Valiant Universe come together to showcase different characters with each story line. Dr. Mirage joins the Valiant universe in his new monthly series. He and his wife Carmen battle the forces of darkness. A very popular pastime, obviously. Valiant's got plenty more lined up for us to watch for.

Raising Cain

In Harris Comics' *Cain*, Jude Cain is a cybernetically enhanced government agent who has been set up for a murder he didn't commit. Now he's AWOL from the agency and following the trail of a senator's runaway daughter. She turns out to be much more than meets the eye. The stories are set on the streets of New York, in the shadow of the dwindling cold war. The book's creative team consists of David Quinn, Hannibal King, and Matt Banning. Look for fantastic painted covers by Brian Stelfreeze.

Dark Horse Creates Comics' Greatest World

A 16 issue mini-series will debut from Dark Horse. Within the series, 16 different characters or teams in 16 different books, over the course of 16 weeks, will be developed and each issue costs a dollar. The series called *Comics' Greatest World*, takes the approach of focusing on events in four different geographic areas. Arcadia, Golden City, Steel Harbor and The Vortex. Each was created from scratch for a unique flavor, yet they will exist along side real world cities. The individual stories are a part of one larger story encompassing all 16 books, the culmination being in issue #16. Some well known artists have been called to work on this project such as Frank Miller, Adam Hughes, Walter Simonson, James O'Barr and others. Dark Horse says the characters will be "buzz" rather than just being transparent.

Deathwatch 2000 Trading Cards

Based on the crossovers found in Continuity's line, the set will include artwork by Neal Adams and other *Deathwatch* artists. The 110 card set consists of 90 regular prism cards plus a seven card set, but forms a large scene depicting these characters, and a three card limited-prism set that will be foil stamped in gold and have three original works by Neal Adams of basketball star Shaquille O'Neil, female hockey goalie Manon Rheaume, and baseball star Ken Griffey Jr. This is another type of cross over designed to attract other audiences. Randomly placed throughout the packs will be a real image hologram.

Image Shifts Into High Gear

April [illegible] A new title consisting of six issues and one giant annual. Alan Moore returns to Image in an attempt to return fans to the Silver Age of comics. Neon Queen, Kid Dynamo, Crystalman and the Planet get fantastic powers and form Mysteries Incorporated. A new ongoing title called *Bloodstrike* will star some new characters. Cabbot (Battlestone's brother), Deadlock, Fourplay, Shogun and Tag, to name a few. They make up an internal affairs watch-dog unit. Their adventures begin when they are assigned to the G.A.T.E. installation known as Jericho. The team is then sold to eliminate *Brigade*! This ties into the Blood Brothers crossover with Brigade. After the Blood Brothers storyline concludes, Brigade will have some new characters (after the deaths of several current members) Lethal, Bronze, and Hacker among others. Deathblow gets his own regular series where he is drawn even deeper into his personal darkness, and events are he must fight to save not only himself, but humanity itself. *Deathblow* will be a "flip-book" showcasing the new heroine Cyberbabes as well. *Phantom Force*, a three issue limited series with the first issue drawn by Jack Kirby, deals with the Phantom Force team, who recalled to steal an antidote that the government has been hiding, a virus that has been plaguing the world for a long time.

May Rob Liefeld's *Prophet* ongoing series is about "a man created in the past to battle the forces of the future, awakened in the present." *Kurse* is a limited series dealing with the origin and mutant powers of

Mike Grell leads Image with the debut of Shaman's Tears, and Rob Liefeld's Prophet becomes a monthly series!

American Indian Robert Bearclaw, also known as Ripclaw. *Shadowhawk II* is a three-issue limited series. Shadowhawk is wanted by the police, the criminals, and Slaughter, who has been hired by the mayor to kill Shadowhawk. *Youngblood Yearbook* (a *Youngblood* annual) follows the Away Team on their journey to Antarctica to investigate a missing CIA team, where they discover a lost land reigned over by Tyrax and his wacky cyborg barbarians. Mike Grell's new ongoing series, *Shaman's Tears*, is a departure from the usual, stars a mystery man who takes on world problems like pollution, corruption, crime and "ecological genocide"(?) The opening story returns us to the day when the Soviet Cosmonauts were stranded in space. Their government had experiments to create a race of half-animal/ half-human beings. Unfortunately, they have no rights, and it's up to this as yet unnamed hero to save the day. In Supreme's eight-issue series, our hero picks up his beef with Khrome. Supreme is rendered powerless when another adversary confronts him, Zachariah Grizlock. Supreme must enlist the aid of Prophet to help rid himslef of Zachariah.

June: *Cyberforce* is another ongoing series springing forth from a mini-series. Look for Stryker, Ripclaw, Cyblade, Impact, Velocity, Ballistic, and Heatwave to return in this new series. *The Savage Dragon* ongoing series introduces Barbaric and Rocket, a duo slated to join the Dragon and the Chicago police force. The Dragon leaves Chicago and runs into the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! Morgan Stryker is the subject of *Stryke Force*, a new ongoing series dealing with a mutant [illegible] to protect high profile clients. They are on the trail of [illegible] The [illegible] ongoing series picks up where the [illegible] series left off. In the beginning we'll find out just what the heck is going on here! Fans get a look at the backgrounds of all the Kherubim and Gifted Ones, who protect the Earth from the evil Daemonites!

Man, am I winded.

Man of War, Gravestone *and* The Ferret *will each get a one-shot from Malibu Comics this year*

Protectors Spawn

No, it's not another Image book, it's the debut of a set of limited series based on the popular Protectors from Malibu. There's *Man of War*, *The Ferret*, and *Gravestone*. These series are designed to give readers an up-close look into these diverse characters. In *Man Of War*, a supra-normal is reportedly in Cuba, and Man Of War attempts to recruit the individual to the Protectors, but finds it's not that easy. *The Ferret* mini-series features a battle against Toxin, a supra-normal, hired by the government to assassinate Ferret. Toxin emerges from a six-year coma determined to make good on his contract. He poisons Ferret, and the series deals with his search for an antidote. In *Gravestone*, Gravestone takes a trip to Graveworld, where he deals with tortured souls who think he's their only hope. One female hitches a ride back to the land of the living and throws off the cosmic balance. Together with Immortal Man, Gravestone must restore the balance.

Liefeld/Spielberg Collaboration!

by Andy Mangels

Another *Wizard* hot item! What do you get when you cross one of comics youngest and most bankable artists with Hollywood's wunderkind director and most bankable producer? Answer: You get *Doom's Four*, a new ecological superhero film. And who are these two top draws? None other than Image Comics' Rob Liefeld and Amblin's Steven Spielberg. Liefeld will be storyboarding, creating the characters and co-producing Doom's Four with Spielberg later this year. And he's not the only Image artist to be headed towards the big screen. Hush-hush negotiations are under way with Jim Lee and Todd McFarlane. As always, you'll read it here first.

Superman x 4

After the sad death of DC's mightiest hero, Jonathan Kent senses his son has returned. Just then, four new characters appear claiming to be the Last Son of Krypton: A cyborg from space, half machine/half alien, claims to be a Superman from the future. No one argues with him!; A cold, unpleasant super-being sets himself up in the Fortress of Solitude, a super-powered teenager who appears to be cloned from the first Superman. He must be a clone because he has no previous memories; and a steel worker who after being buried alive in the aftermath of Superman's fight with Doomsday, makes himself a suit of high-tech armor and becomes a literal Man of Steel! These characters will be previewed in *Adventures of Superman* #500 which comes out in April. Later, each will star in a special issue of one of four monthly Superman comics: *Action Comics* #687, *Superman: The Man of Steel* #22, *Superman* #78, and *Adventures of Superman* #501. Superman editor Mike Carlin says "The time has come to put the rumors to rest and get on with the "never ending battle." This should help clear things up. Look for more details in *Wizard*'s all-Superman special edition in April.

Chekov Launches Raver

Walter Koenig, known so well for his portrayal of Chekov in the classic *Star Trek*, has signed aboard Malibu Comics to produce *Raver*, his first full-color superhero title. In the *Raver* universe, things are lookin' grim; the stars themselves are dying, and around the few that remain the population is quickly becoming too much. Norman Walters is chosen to help create new worlds (neat trick). When Walters gets angry, his twisted visions become real, he then must fight the evil in those visions. When all is done, he's left with an inhabitable world. Unless he can't defeat his adversary ..then he is trapped within his own nightmares.

Toy Flash

by Brian Cunningham

The names of the1993 Toy Biz X-Men figures have been released! Included are 2 new Cables, a new Kane, Cannonball, Grizzly, and Krute, a new Wolverine, Bishop, Strong Guy, a new Apocalypse, Tusk, Gauntlet, a new Cyclops, Maverick, Longshot, a new Sabretooth, Ahab and a Brood Drone(!) Don't get too excited, because they are all tentative and subject to change. Next month, you'll get the full low-down in Toying Around.

Little Nemo on videocassette

Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland, a movie based on Winsor McCay's famous comic strip dealing with the adventures of a young boy and his adventures through the magical realm of Slumberland, is making its way to the home video market. Hemdale Home Video and Tropicana Products are working in agreement for the home video release, which will retail for a suggested $24.95. Massive promotional campaigns including, print, radio and television ads. Consumers will receive a $5.00 rebate from Tropicana with the purchase of the Little Nemo videocassette and Tropicana Triplets orange juice. Aside from the rebate offer, there is a Little Nemo;Colorform set offered as a premium with purchases of Tropicana Triplets orange juice. The promotions for these special offers will be seen on the Triplets packages and in The Children's Television Workshop Kids Magazines. So not only can you purchase a highly acclaimed animated film, but lots of other neat things for our younger audience members too!

CROSSROADS

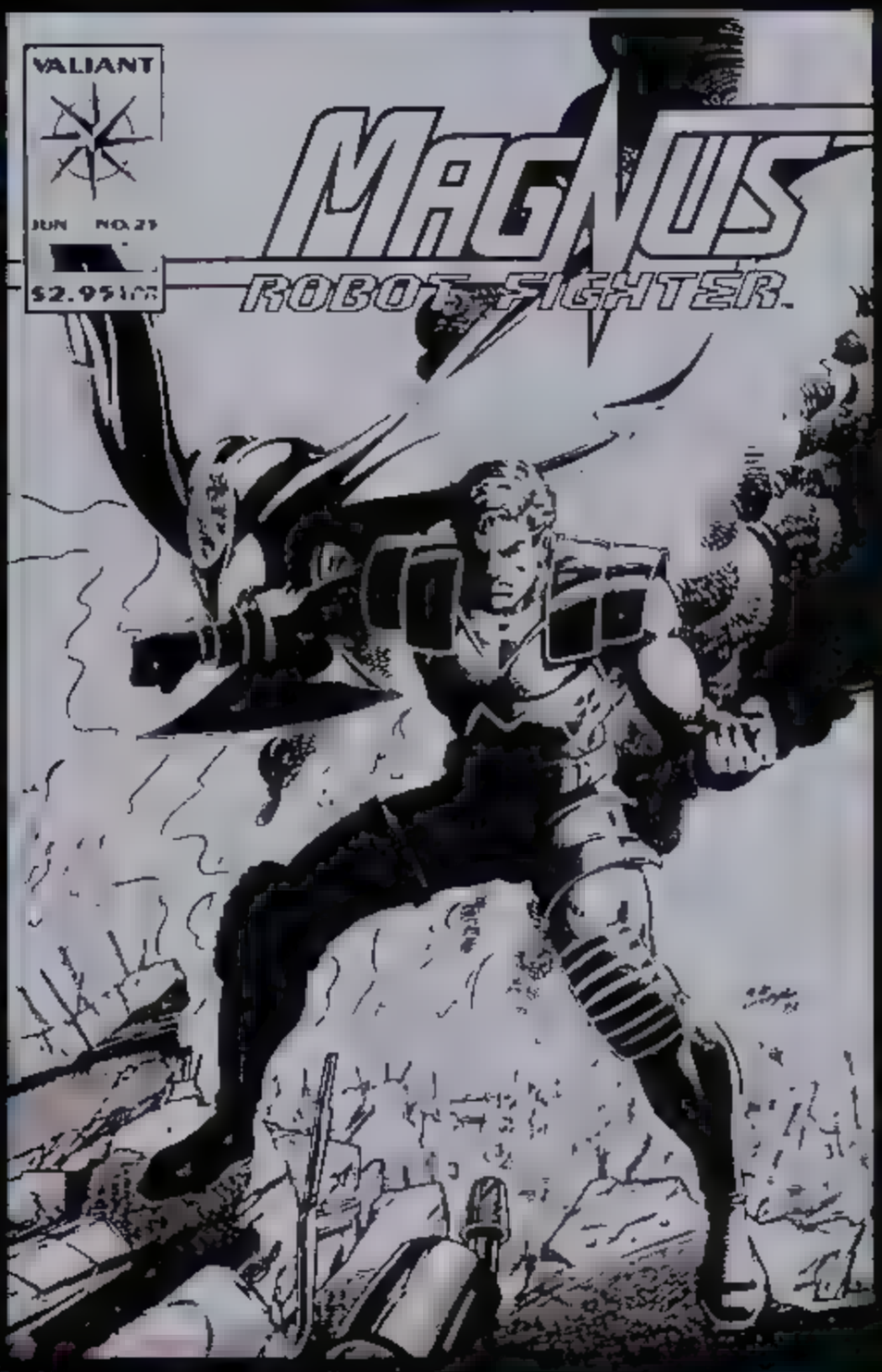
By JOHN OSTRANDER

JAMES BROCK

RALPH REESE

MARK CSASZAR

Cover Penciled & Inked By BOB LAYTON



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PALMER'S PICKS

Scott McCloud is considered by other creators to be an important creator and inventor in the comics medium. His work, including *Zot!* and *Destroy!!*, is fresh and innovative, and he has originated several significant concepts that have proved useful to some cartoonists, from the Creator's Bill of Rights to 24-hour comics.

Zot! began as a sketchbook drawing, and gradually grew into a full proposal for a comic-book series. McCloud was working in the production department at DC at the time, and decided to shop his character around to several companies. He eventually settled at Eclipse, where *Zot!* premiered as a full-color comic in the spring of 1984. While the initial issues were somewhat unpolished, the story and art had a certain innocence and charm about them.

McCloud's concept for the comic was simple. Zot is a superhero from another dimension who stumbles into our dimension and runs into a girl named Jenny. She is sick of the boredom and imperfections of life, and Zot comes from a utopian society where everything is perfect. Most of the stories revolve around Zot's efforts to protect his world, and Jenny's yearnings to leave this earth.

After producing ten color issues of *Zot!*, McCloud took a break from the series, eventually returning to continue the comic in black and white. He added a back-up feature, illustrated by mini-comic artist Matt Feazell, entitled "The Adventures of Zot in Dimension 10-1/2." Feazell drew the regular cast of *Zot!* as stick figures and added his own Cynicalman and Antisocialman to produce some entertaining stories.

With the new black-and-white format, McCloud was able to show off his expertise in shading and black spotting. His writing continued to improve, showing maturity and sophistication in "The Earth Stories," a series of down-to-earth stories that began in issue #28. Each of the comics in "The Earth Stories" showcased a supporting character and their day-to-day struggles and triumphs. McCloud dealt with such subjects as sex, comic-book fandom, and sexual identity with honesty and sometimes shocking frankness. "The Earth Stories" ran until McCloud took another break from *Zot!* with issue #36 in the summer of 1991.

In his first break from *Zot!*, McCloud was able to complete a satire of comic-book fight scenes in the hilarious *Destroy!!* Currently, McCloud is in the middle of his second break from *Zot!* and in the process of completing *Understanding Comics*, an "essay in comics form" that promises to explore the medium of comics. McCloud plans to deal with such aspects of comics as how they are perceived by the mind, and how color changes the way comics are read.

Aside from his regular cartooning, McCloud has come up with two important inventions. The first of these is the Creator's Bill of Rights, a 12-point statement of the inherent rights a creator has to his creations and the way they are printed and distributed. The other is the idea of 24-hour comics in which a cartoonist has one day to complete a twenty-four page comic from the initial story to final inking and lettering. McCloud was the first to try out this idea, and others soon followed, like Steve Bissette and Dave Sim.

With his constant efforts to stretch the boundaries of the artform, Scott McCloud is able to keep his work and the medium of comics fresh and exciting by relying on old-fashioned inventiveness and not repetitive gimmicks.

Scott McCloud is considered to be an important creator and inventor in the comics medium

Artwork from Zot #25 © 1988 Scott McCloud

His stories are easily accessible and his artwork is a pleasure to look at.

To wrap things up, I'd like to mention some other items that should be out in stores now or in the coming month. Kitchen Sink has published an interesting assortment of boxed card sets in the past few months. Highlights include the satirical *Republicans Attack!*, featuring computer-altered photos of George Bush and Dan Quayle and others, and *Goon Squad*, showcasing the artwork of Charles Burns. Bug your local comic store for these items or contact Kitchen Sink at 2 Swamp Rd Princeton, WI 54968.

Tragedy Strikes Press and Cult Press have recently published some interesting comics. Tragedy Strikes publishes a variety of alternative comics, like *Reactor Girl*, *Way Out Strips* by Carol Swain, and *The Cheese Heads* by Nick Craine. A full-color *Tragedy Strikes!* sampler, packaged in a CD jewel box with art by Nick Craine, Dylan Horrocks, Jason Stephens and Carol Swain is also available. If you can't find these in your local store, contact Tragedy Strikes at 30 Wyndham Street North, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1H 4E5. Cult Press is a relatively small new publisher, with two titles: *Raggedyman* and *Windows*. Both are in black and white, with *Windows* being an anthology title. The premiere of *Raggedyman* features a cover by Bryan Talbot, and the first issue of *Windows* has some beautiful black-and-white art by Tommy Berg. Write to Cult Press at 1047, W. Carson St. #3, Torrance, CA 90502 if you can't find copies locally.

Next month: I'll feature Michael Allred, a new talent whose work can currently be seen in full color in *Madman Adventures* from Tundra. I'm still promising to try and answer all of the mail I receive, so keep sending your comments and suggestions. The address is: Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd. Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. ☆

Recommended Reading

Zot! - Thirty-six issues of *Zot!* were published by Eclipse between 1984 and 1991. The first ten were in color and were published through 1985. McCloud took a break for other projects and resumed *Zot!* in black and white in 1987. A two-volume set of trade paperback reprintings of the color issues entitled *The Original Zot!* was announced by Eclipse, but only one has appeared so far. The original coloring was lost in a flood that hit the Eclipse offices, so the entire set of issues had to be recolored for the reprinting. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Eclipse at PO Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436 for a catalog and price list.

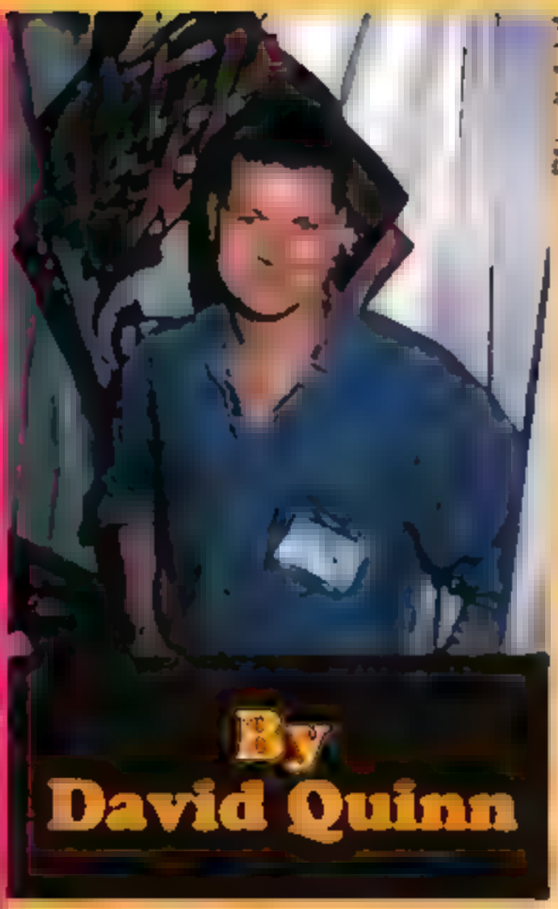
Destroy!! - This comic was originally published by Eclipse as an oversized black-and-white comic in 1986. It was reprinted as part of Eclipse's 3-D line of comics, complete with 3-D glasses. Both of these editions are fairly scarce, but you could try contacting Eclipse at the above address for copies.

A Day's Work - Scott McCloud's 24-hour comic was published in *Taboo Especial*, from Spiderbaby Graphix and Tundra Publishing. Copies can be ordered from Tundra at 320 Riverside Dr., Northhampton, MA 01060. Twenty-four-hour comics from other artists have been published in *Cerebus* (#142 featuring Dave Sim's "Bigger Blacker Kiss" and #147 with Neil Gaiman's "Life and Death of Emperor Heliogabolus"), *Taboo* (pre-ordered copies of volume 7 with Steve Bissette's "A Life in Black and White") and *The Maximortal* (all issues with "Rare Bit Fiends" back-up feature by Rick Veitch).

Understanding Comics - This has not yet been published, but it should appear soon from Tundra. A sneak preview of the first chapter was published in the 200th issue of *Amazing Heroes*.

Not Available Comics - Matt Feazell's mini-comic work is available from his own Not Available Comics at 3867 Bristow, Detroit, MI 48212. Various titles are available, featuring Antisocialman, Cynicalman, and others. Send a dollar or two, and Matt will send you his latest comic and a list of other things for you to order. He has also had comics published in *Giant Size Mini Comics* and *The Amazing Cynicalman* from Eclipse and *Ant Boy* from SteelDragon Press.

WRITING AT THE EDGE



By
David Quinn

Holiday Inn in Indianapolis, and I'm witnessing something I don't see every day. It's myself on television... that is, my head on television. My head on television is huge, pale, precarious...a runaway balloon caught in a searchlight.

Voices inside the head: This is your head: this is your head on television. Didn't cultures dubbed "primitive" by parochial Westerners hold that cameras could rip off their soul? How did I get here?

A comic convention the last weekend of 1992. I'm doing the usual number, meeting new readers, giving away a few posters, signing comics, confiding my small experience with aspiring creators, and hyping a certain soulful slasher, a chili demon huntress, a woman with a feline thing, and other friends of mine. I'm ambivalent about hype. Puritan upbringing. Only lawyers and scum-sucking bottom dwellers degrade themselves that way, pushing themselves on the public like wanton televangelists. The work speaks for itself.

But wait a minute—here I am in The Guide to Hype, right? I must have made the pragmatic decision to Get Over It. Yes and no. Acknowledged, my audience seeks a "road less traveled," and that some of us make our readers one at a time, gotta get out and push, smell the crowd, and all that. Still, deep inside, my white-bread soul condemns me as a bigger trollop than "Data" in a Shadowhawk suit.

But I told you all that so I could tell you this. I know today's convention's not about an overwhelming financial return in new readers; the Hoosier crowd's already been cleaned out by dealers ransoming Dead Superman. (Old news and a soft market by the time this sees print, I would guess.) Today's return's measured in a more human value. A young man comes around again and again, bantering, then finally lacking the nerve to declare that he's going to be a writer. When he says he's gotten some inspiration from this mini-column, my irreverence is about to tell him the poster's free anyway. "Well, that makes six of us who actually admit to reading it," I cough, "Thanks." Then an artist presents me with a fierce demon skull, a beautiful, detailed piece. Isn't this going to keep insurance salesmen at bay on the flight back to Detroit?

Yeah. So, Quinn's gratitude's got him all warm and runny. Social. And his host, Andy Holzman, zooms and weaves to the table, "Do you want to be on TV?" And voices inside the head again: Shucks, no, I'm just a writer...the artists are the real reason we are all here today. TV? What show, "Indiana's Religious Right, The KKK, and You?" I'd rather study another rumpled stack of these stiff Jim Lee tracings on lined notebook paper some kid wants "input" on—TV is right out! Sorry, I'm not comfortable with looking stupid—could you ask someone else? When I was interviewed for "Popcorn," the Italian MTV, my dubbed voice came off in a really seductive nasal dialect. I'll bet my publisher, *Il Formaggio Grande*, hasn't done that.

Here's what I really say: Are we on?

The remote camera team, a man and woman, are friendly but perfunctory. They know who I am and what I write. I have no delusions. Andy told them. But there's no denying it—something has made hundreds of people brave the cold this holiday weekend. Comics? Well, money. The media take money seriously—hundreds were spent in admissions, in the post-industrial Midwest, people! So, they want to know How I Got Into Working in Comics and What I Think of Their Success Today.

After drawing a few short lines describing my own path from performance to writing to writing comics—I think we're still getting a mike level, but the woman is smiling and nodding—I generalize: The entertainment comics offer is uniquely immediate—fast, relatively cheap to enjoy or create, and colorful entertainment. It's generally perceived as a medium for children—and opportunistic filmmakers—in our country. Power fantasies for kids, that's what today's marketing setup exploits best. But I've noticed a steady hardcore following for alternative comics—a few of them from "traditional publishers"—that prove there are no limits to the kinds of stories that can be told for all kinds of readers. And I do mean *readers*.

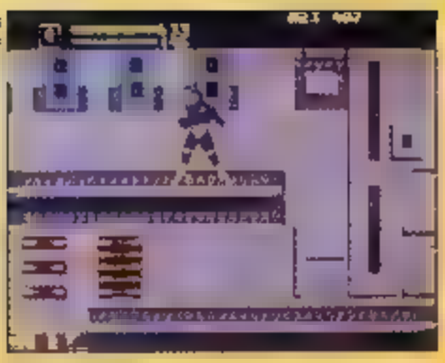
Read me carefully, now. The sad truth. TV makes you real.

"You were in that comic thing," the bartender smiles, "Ah saw you on TV!" Thanks to the tube, this isn't a tired customer looking for a quiet sandwich and a drink. And it isn't the first time I've felt this. Back in my highstrung music days, the old Ritz downtown installed eight-foot video monitors on the stage. Consequence: I couldn't bounce into the crowd without getting flagged or grabbed. I hadn't changed. But people wanted that eight-foot head!

Hey, it's sure not what's in the head they want. Want to know how my interview boiled down to six hot seconds on the news? I turned, via editing, into a grinning anchorman who leaned on my word "hardcore" and quoted Writer Quinn, "Comics are fast and cheap." His co-anchor mugged, "Fast and cheap—just the way I like it," and then he became a commercial. And that's my head on hype. ★

AT THE Controls

Glenn Rubenstein



TACKLE THE NEW GENESIS X-MEN GAME AND STEP INTO THE SHOES OF WOLVERINE, CYCLOPS, GAMBIT OR WOLVERINE. ALONE OR WITH A FRIEND

Twice a year, the Consumer Electronics Show takes place (Las Vegas in January, Chicago in June) and gives the videogame industry a glimpse of what is to come in the next few months. I've been attending these shows for more than two years now, and this one was no different from past shows when it came to breaking news, and exciting information.

The buzz on the floor was about a company called 3DO, which wants to bring a super system CD ROM machine to the consumer for around $700. The machine looked impressive but until the price point comes down you won't be hearing a lot about it in this column.

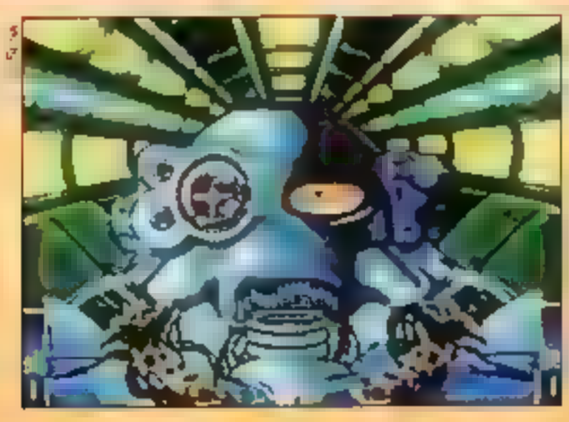
The main talk of the show was, once again, the battle between Nintendo and Sega. Both sides are in a dead tie with the 16-bit consumer market, and Sega has the jump on CD. Any way you look at it, this is going to be some year. Nintendo only had a handful of games at their booth for the Gameboy, NES and Super Nintendo, but Sega dazzled everyone with over 40 games for Game Gear, Genesis and Sega CD.

Here are my picks for the top ten games/products of the show:

1. X-MEN (Sega for Genesis, April) The game was supposed to be out at Christmas, but from what I played in Las Vegas it is well worth the wait. The graphics are outstanding, the gameplay is phenomenal, and the concept couldn't work better. The game is based on Marvel Comics' *X-Men* series and you get a choice of four characters: Wolverine, Cyclops, Gambit and Nightcrawler. Each has his own special technique, and the two-player action makes this an awesome game. Definitely expect to see more in this space as we get closer to the April release date.

2. STARFOX (Nintendo for SNES, March). This flight simulator is the first game to use Nintendo's SFX Chip (which allows more three-dimensional graphics). It takes place in the future, and you play a Fox who pilots his ship throughout many treacherous worlds. The graphics are smooth and the gameplay is unique. It's the first of its kind on the SNES, and gives SNES fans what they've been waiting for.

NEWS



3. The Activator (Sega for Genesis, Fall). Interactivity is nothing new in the field of video games (remember the Power Glove? U Force?). Now Sega is looking to redefine that field with the Activator, which literally puts you in the game. The peripheral itself looks like a model train track you lay down in a circle around your feet, then infra-red beams sense your movement (so when you jump a character on screen jumps). What sets this apart from the peripherals of systems past is that it remains simplistic, and is a whole lot of fun.

4. Flashback, The Quest For Identity (US Gold for Genesis, Spring). Who says you need CD-ROM for a great game? *Flashback* packs the strength of a CD game into a cartridge. There are animated intermissions, detailed movement, and an incredible plot all rolled into this 12-megabit cartridge. *Flashback* looks to be a game like nothing seen before; check it out.

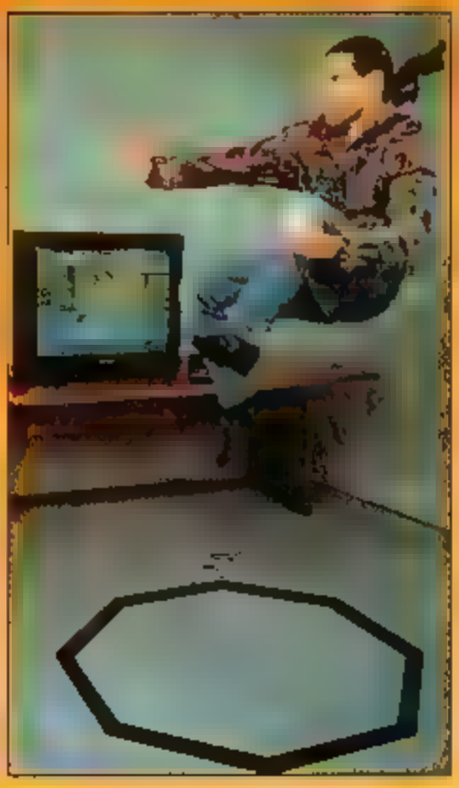
5. Star Trek—The Next Generation (Spectrum Holobyte for Genesis, SNES and Sega CD, Fall). The game that has been a long time in the making is almost a reality. Hop aboard the USS Enterprise for tons of 24th-century adventure. The game looked great and is sure to be just what Sci-Fi fans want when it comes out later this year.

6. Cyborg Justice (Sega for Genesis, Spring). Talk about an interesting concept—customize your robot, then go head-to-head in a death duel with other mean cyborgs. There are plenty of parts to make your robot with, so the game is sure to challenge even the most talented cyborg jockeys.

7. Taz-Mania (Sunsoft for SNES mid-year). *Taz-Mania* was incredible on the Genesis, but this SNES version promises to be a totally new game. You play the game looking over the shoulder of Taz as you run through numerous courses, dodging obstacles and grabbing food. This game is a must for cartoon fans.

8. Final Fight II (Capcom for SNES, mid-year). *Final Fight* set the standard for fighting games when it was released for the SNES two years ago, this sequel promises to be twice as explosive as the original, featuring new characters and new moves to quench fight fans' thirst.

9. Mortal Kombat (Acclaim for SNES and Genesis, Christmas). *Mortal*



Streets of Rage 2

fighting games before. But original with concepts reminiscent of *Street Fighter 2*, the game is head-and-shoulders above those in its genre. The crowd. Overall: B+

WILL THE SEGA GENESIS STREETS OF RAGE 2 GIVE STREET FIGHTER II A RUN FOR ITS MONEY?

Prince of Persia

(Sega for Sega CD) The PC classic comes to the Sega CD. Go through numerous levels to rescue your fair princess, and the computer original, but full animation is a nice touch. But the graphics could ve been better. Overall: B

Superman

(Sunsoft for Genesis) Up, up and away! Superman is far from dead on the Sega Genesis comic-book fan's dream. The catch on with fans across the board. Overall: B

Firepower 2000

(Sunsoft for SNES) Finally! An above-average shooter on the SNES that Konami didn't do which makes it an overall winner. Should be big with into it. Overall: B

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Kriss Kross

game on the market, and it's not that impressive shines through, and for rap fans the game is a must. Overall: B-

Marky Mark & The Funky Bunch

This game is good, but not old, and the concept is a brother and sister who let Mark video. The songs are a bit played out; Marky's little ten-second appearance once is nice though. Overall: B+

© Sega Corp.

another batch in 1993

Kombat has been building a massive following among arcade fans, even rivaling that of *Street Fighter II*. Look for Acclaim to bring the game to the SNES and Genesis later this year, with perhaps a little bit of the gore missing.

10. Slipheed (Sega for Sega CD, Fall). Although this game is very early, it looks as if it may give *StarFox* a run for it's money. The game uses four dimensional polygon graphics, and should be enough for *Sega Flight Simulator* fans looking for a good space adventure.

So there you have a general idea of what was shown at CES. Lots of these games will be out sooner than you think, so keep watching this space for more info. W

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SUNSOFT

BY CRAIG CORNELL

Hey gang, glad you could make it. [illegible] of the best overall games I've played on the S-NES all year. OK, so we're only in March, big deal. I'm writing the whole column about *Prince of Persia*, from Konami. It gets the de.uxe treatment because, well...it deserves it. But first you need a brief rundown of the game.

As I'm sure many of you know, this game has made some waves on the personal computer circuit (and if you didn't, you know now). The computer game was designed and created by famed computer designer Jordan (*Karateka*) Mechner. He's definitely outdone himself with this one. Here's how the story of the game shakes down:

ONE OF [illegible]

The Sultan of ancient Persia leaves his kingdom on an expedition. In his absence he .eaves his daughter and the affairs of government and kingdom in the hands of his most trusted confidante, and Grand Vizier, Jaffar. What the Sultan doesn't know is that Jaffar has been plotting to take over the kingdom, and he decides now is the time. Jaffar orders his servants to kidnap the princess, who meanwhile has fallen in .ove with a youth from a different land. Because of this the young man is captured too, while sitting with the princess chewin' the fat. The princess is locked in a tower and ordered to marry Jaffar so he can become Sultan, or she will suffer the ultimate consequences. He gives her two hours to decide before...shhhlick! Meanwhile, our young hero is imprisoned .n the palace dungeons, but manages to escape. Now is when you take control of the young adventurer, and begin to hack and slice your way up out of the dungeons, to the tower, and rescue her before her time runs out! No prob? Not!

If you wait a bit, you get a cinematic screen opening of the story I just gave you, then you push start and your adventure begins. You emerge from your ce.l on the lowest leve: of the dungeon. Your job throughout this game is to maneuver your way through each level, past bloodthirsty guards, around numerous body-rending traps, find the way out, all while keeping your cool. Not a game for the high strung, I must say.

The thing I noticed most had to be the increasing quality of the game as it progressed. Every level is more

NEED [illegible]

detailed: New traps, harder puzzles, new and more difficult bosses and guards, just the whole bin o' bakava. Th[illegible] who have played the computer game will notice a few similarities in the beginning, but nothing to punch a camel over. Besides, the awesome look they gave to each level, even the ones that are almost identical to the PC game, makes it hard to figure out exactly how you got out in the PC game (And I just finished the Macintosh version a few weeks before this came out!). This is because even though the exit is reached the same way, there is more detail to the scenes and even more area added to the levels. Plus there are eight al. new levels.

The real shiny spot in this game is the hero's animation. Although not as smooth as the PC game, it's still better than just about any character that has appeared on the S-NES to date, except maybe my buddy Ryu. He can walk, run, take careful steps (he will stop himse.f from walking over unsafe plates, or he can sneak past other traps), jump, climb, and he wields a mean scimitar. With sword in hand he can only block, thrust, and move back and forth, which makes the sword fights more of a duel than a Conan-type gut-slinging, bone-

SAVE YOUR LOVE

crunching sweat match. The realism of the characters gives you the impression you really are fighting for your and your lover's life... a quality you don't get too often anymore in games.

Then of course ya can't forget the traps: definitely the best playing aspect of this game. There are quite a few, some old, some new, from the simple to the squeamish: Floor plates that collapse when you're walking on them, spikes that spring up from the floor when you get too close, razor-sharp blades and guillotines that give a nasty part down the middle, weights that squish you flat, and plenty more. Noticeably absent from this version though is the gore that the PC game had. However disappointing this is, we must remember that this game will be played by kids of all ages. What gore there is when you get cut in half or fall ten floors and go splat fades from the screen quickly.

Another thing that was carried over from the PC game is the time limit. In the PC game you got one hour to complete 12 levels, in this game you get two hours to complete 20 levels. But since there's a password feature, and you can continually redo the last level if you made bad time, the time limit is really unnecessary. And getting rid of the password would ruin this game. The problem is the time limit is part of the sto All in all the added areas to the levels similar to the PC game, the all new levels, boss characters (yes, in the PC game, the only real boss was Jaffar), and the more extensive detail, make this a much better version of an already great game. Ratings go like so:

Graphics are flawless. The new backgrounds and scenery are at times breathtaking, from the colored tiles to the last battle scene with Jaffar. Real stop-and-lookers. The hero character was kind of dark though, and my one true complaint: There are one or two near stop slow-downs in the few situations when there are too many things moving on the screen.

Control is perfect for this game. It's hard to get used to, especially to newcomers, but this game's challenge is to learn patience, not run around as fast as you can while stomping up and down on the "kill" button. Each button controls one specific aspect, like the careful step, the jump, block, swing your sword. No joint-snapping combinations like in some games. There are customizing options that help with just about any problem you might have (with the game I mean; personal problems, see your therapist.

Challenge, like I said, is part of the game. There are levels where you actually must fall to reach the next level, times when you must put away your sword and use your brain. A refreshing change, I thought. Becoming familiar with the controls, and learning to sword fight, are the hardest. There's a tendency to run everywhere and try to kill everyone in three strokes.

Fun is plentiful. Getting the hang of the controls and keeping myself from running full speed into everything was actually enjoyable. Other games frustrate me, this one didn't.

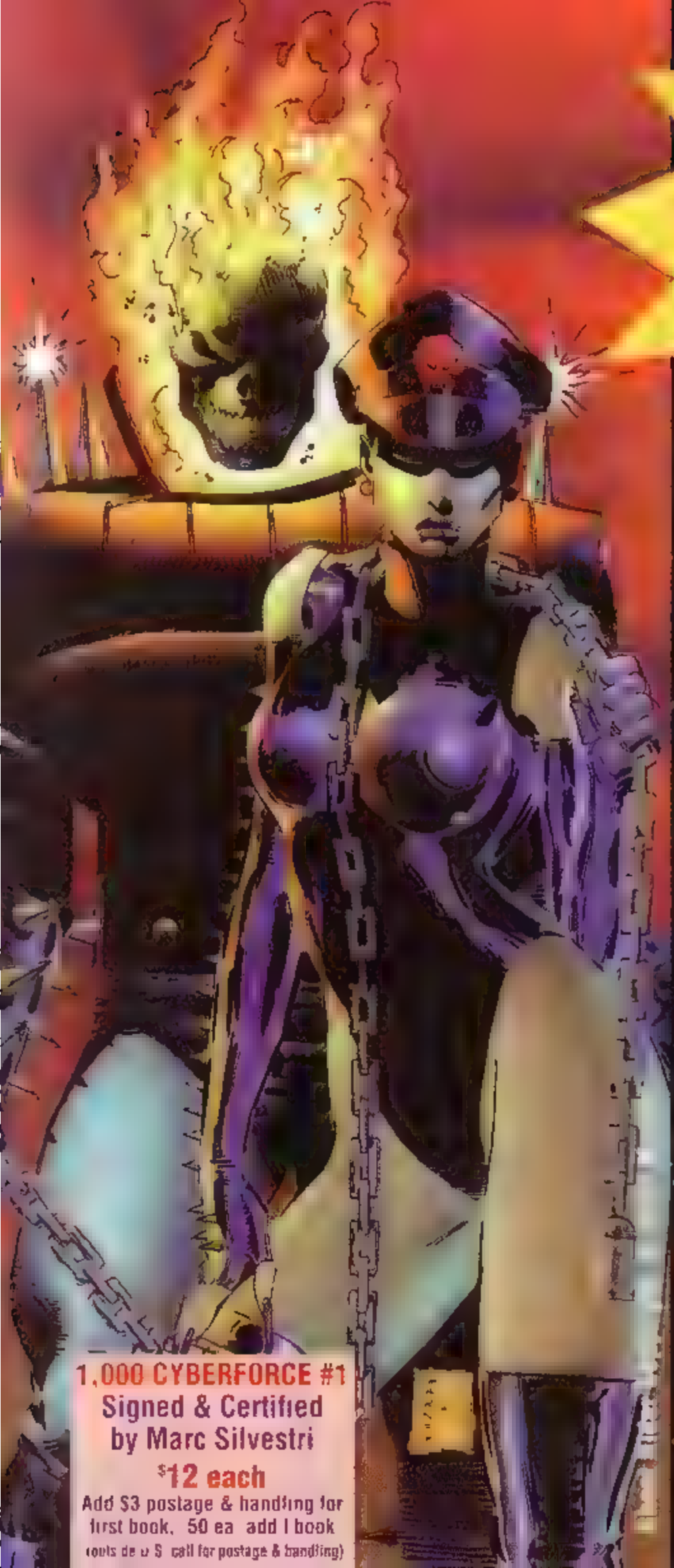
Sound effects were nice too. A bit on the bland side, and some are worse than the PC game, but not a serious problem.

Overall quality is superior. A nice departure from the flood of fighting games that've been coming out. It also amazed me how much detail went into this game: I always expected the game to level off— instead I was constantly surprised.

GAME TIPS

In the instruction book hidden rooms are mentioned. But I did a little checking, and apparently all they are talking about is the few places where you must jump off the screen to continue. There are no "hidden" rooms in reality. When you reach the teleportals, look above them—they have symbols on the door frames. When you emerge, the one you come out of will also have the same symbol. This'll help you figure out where you're going (and where you've been).

Got a question about some video games? Write to: 16-Bit Power, c/o Wizard Press, 100 B-1 Red Schoolhouse Rd. Chestnut Ridge NY 10977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BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH BART SEARS

This month, I thought I'd use this column to respond to at least some of the mail that readers and talented young artists have sent in. Please don't get discouraged if you have sent something in and it isn't mentioned here. I *do* look at every piece of art and read every letter that *Wizard* forwards to me, and—while it is impossible for me to reply personally—as Brutes and Babes expands in the near future, I hope to be able to devote space regularly to reader questions and critique. So keep those questions and drawings pouring in. (I've included some guidelines for submissions towards the end, and I'll look forward to seeing them.) Now, let's get to it!

Ron Windom asks about the terms related to drawing a comic-book page. Below are some common terms relating to comic-book construction.

ELS/Extreme Long-Shot: Panel drawn from such a great distance away from an object that details, such as people or cars, are not visible.

LS/Long-Shot: Panel drawn from a great distance where some details are visible.

MS/Medium-Shot: Panel drawn in which the figures (or main object) are visible from head to toe.

MCU/Medium Close-Up: Shot in which half of the figure fills the panel.

CU/Close-Up: Shot in which a head or hand, etc., fills the panel.

ECU/Extreme Close-Up: Shot so tight that just a small part of an object is seen, such as an eye or a finger, etc., fills the panel.

Up-Shot: Panel in which the reader is looking up at an object.

Worm's Eye View: Or extreme up-shot, panel which is drawn looking up at an object in an extreme perspective, such as looking up at Captain America from the toe of his boot.

Down-Shot: Panel in which the reader is looking down at an object.

Bird's Eye View: Or extreme down-shot, panel drawn looking down upon an object from far away.

Establishing Shot: Usually a long shot, drawn to show the readers where the character(s) are, like a bus station, etc., who the character(s) are, brute and babe, and the spatial relationships between the character(s) and their environment.

Panel: Term used to describe the different boxes which border the drawings that make up a page of comic-book art.

Page: An individual sheet of paper on which a single comic-book illustration, consisting of from one to six (on average) panels have been drawn.

Splash: Any page of a comic book consisting of only one panel, usually the first page of a story and usually where the title and credits are placed.

Gutter: The blank area between panels.

Robert Lederer asks about copyrighting his own character.

The simplest way to protect your creations begins with making a photocopy of your drawing (of your character), then sign and date it. Next, seal the photocopy in an envelope and mail it to yourself, registered mail, return receipt requested. When you receive it, don't open it, put it away someplace safe (a safe deposit box, a fire safe, under your pillow, etc.). As long as you never break the seal on the envelope you have proof of the date the envelope was mailed and the date it was received. This is a cheap and simple way to protect your ideas. One note... if you have an idea worth stealing, it is really far easier for the editor or whomever to credit and pay you for your ideas than to risk a lawsuit; also keep in mind that it is really possible for two people to come up with the same idea at the same time.

U.S. copyright law now holds that a work is copyrighted to the creator upon completion, so long as the notation "Copyright © [year] [name]" is affixed.

Sherri Whidden asks about helpful books or videos.

For those of you who have followed my column from the start you know that I have recommended several books on drawing and drawing comics and I won't rehash them here. I will recommend a series of books by Burne Hogarth:

Dynamic Anatomy
Dynamic Figure Drawing
Dynamic Light and Shade
Dynamic Wrinkles and Drapery
Drawing the Human Head
and
Drawing Dynamic Hands

You will notice as you study these books the excellent command Hogarth has of the human figure and of its relationship in space. His dynamic drawing style is filled with energy and well-suited as a teaching tool for superhero comics. The only reservation that I have in recommending these books is that they are so powerful and absorbing that I have seen many new students dive so completely into the musculature that Hogarth scripts that they overlook the beginning stages of learning to draw (proportion, perspective, layout, design, etc.) and become lost in hundreds of drawings of formless muscles that could barely be called human. (Not Hogarth's drawings, but their own.) Remember, learning is about discipline, it's important to learn in stages, and to master one stage before going on to the next. For instance, you cannot add numbers before learning to count them. So, study these books, learn from them, but don't become so enchanted with the musculature that you overlook the basic block-and-cube figure that Hogarth has used to construct each and every dynamic figure in his books.

The Brute Plot

First, let me thank all of you who sent in Brute plot samp e pages, a lot of great stuff there! Sadly, I only have enough space to show two of these pages. If your page isn't shown, don't despair—this wasn't a contest. Keep your drawings pouring in, and maybe something wil get printed in the future.

The first Brute plot was sent to me by Wayne A. Wong. As you can see, Wayne has done a fairly tight pencil version. Let's look at a few things, good and bad:

Nice, clear storytelling throughout, you can really follow Brute's action as he turns and reacts to Major Villain. Storytelling is the key to drawing powerful comics, Wayne, and it looks like you have a pretty good handle on it. Now work on beefing up your layout with more depth and excitement.

There is no reason for this panel #4 to break up into the corner on panel #3. Wayne—only try to break panel borders when there is some purpose or action that warrants it, otherwise it becomes annoying and breaks the flow of the story. It also lessens the impact of the shot where you really needed to break the panel border

Wayne did a pretty good job with Brute throughout. He's recognizable, metallic, and even big and bulky. Great job! Wayne—work on hardening and chiseling the muscles and check the proportion carefully on your figures. Keep working!

Backgrounds and perspective are the weak points of this page. There just isn't any realistic detail to the backgrounds that make them believable. Study your surroundings and even look at films like *Star Wars* and note the details that work in real life and the detail that works in fantastical settings. Remember your "sets" will be more believable if there is some implied purpose to what you draw in them.

Wayne, all in all, a really great job. Keep sending stuff in, I'd love to see it.

The second Brute plot was sent in by Scott Dalrymple. Scott also has done a fairly tight pencil job. Let's go pick it apart:

The backgrounds on this page are so-so. The organic ground and mountains and smoke is fine, but the buildings lack any real believable detail (the broken windows were a nice touch, but the detail, or lack of, surrounding them wasn't)

A good job on Major Villain's look, and you carried the design through well in both views.

A fairly good job with the storytelling, Scott, although I would have liked to see a bit more of Brute in either panel #2, 3 or 4. We need a good shot of his bod. Also, it would have been better if you hadn't switched sides of the panel for Brute and Major Villain in panel #6.

Brute has a nice, metallic texture, although his musculature has a rubbery, bloopy look. Scott—work on hardening those muscles with straight lines and sharp angles.

Scott, basically you've done a nice, impressive piece of work. Keep drawing and let's see how far you can go.

Blaine Smith writes and asks that I write a couple of more plots a la Brute plot, so that you guys can have more material to work from. Okay...Here goes:

The Venom Plot

Panel 1: Venom, drooling, muscles pumping, swings high over the city.

Panel 2: CU of Venom, who is pleased with himself, having just spotted the target of his search.

Panel 3: CU to the target of his search, Spider-Man, hanging upside down under a ledge of a building, webbing his clothes in place.

Panel 4: Spidey, clinging to the wall, goes about his business, coming towards the reader, and fails to see the shape looming ominously behind him. It is of course, Venom, preparing to strike.

Well, that's a pretty easy one, now let's try something a little bit more difficult...

The Hulk Plot

Panel 1: ECU of the Hulk's face, slightly puzzled, a little bewildered, and of course, slightly pissed off

Panel 2: pull back for LS of deserted city street, Hulk standing in the middle of it, looking around, thinking. The cars on the street appear as if their owners just left them in the middle of driving home—it looks like there should be people all over but that they just disappeared.

Panel 3: MCU Hulk, bending down to peer into one of the cars (your choice) whose door was left open. No answers are inside it.

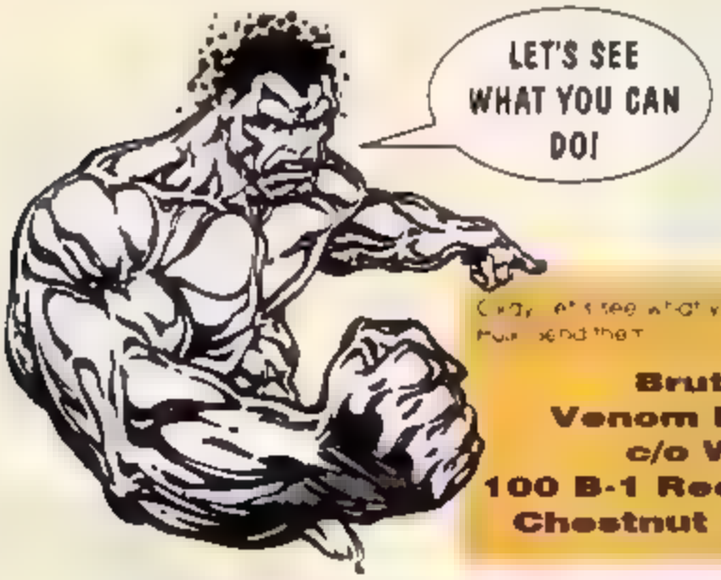
Panel 4: MS of Hulk angry, slamming the door of the car, the car visibly rocking, the windows shattering from the impact.

Panel 5: MCU Hulk, crying out in mingled rage and confusion, obviously tormented.

Panel 6: CU Hulk wiping his sweaty face with his hand, looking miserable and depressed.

Panel 7: ECU Hulk's face still covering much of it, key on one eye, which is wide and staring in shocked surprise

Well, there are two more one-page plots for you to work on. Finish them off and send them in, I would love to see them, and who knows.



Okay, let's see what you guys can do with Venom and the Hulk. Send them

Brutes & Babes
Venom Plot or **Hulk Plot**
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David Weinstein and Alexander C. Brown wrote to ask about past Brutes and Babes that they had missed...

Well, I'm happy to announce that sometime this year a collected edition of Brutes and Babes will be available which will reprint all of the previous Brutes and Babes as well as feature expanded sections with new material and lots more. Also keep on the lookout for the art contest that will go along with it.

I'd like to take this time to spell out some guidelines for future art submissions to Brutes and Babes. First of all, although I enjoy seeing all of your drawings, I can't print and critique anything unless it directly relates to something I've assigned or demonstrated here in this column. Next, if you can help it, try not to fold your submissions up into little tiny envelopes. Some that I have received have been so wrinkled that they were hard to see. Third, to be more easily seen, try to do each and every drawing you do within a border; it also makes your work appear more professional. And finally, you don't have to send originals! A good photocopy is more than adequate for my purposes. But, most of all, keep drawing, whether you send it in or not!

In closing, I'd like to thank all of you again for your continued response and support. Speaking of response, I have been smothered with hundreds of Cable covers! It's going to take me another month to swim through them and I've looked through a lot of them. It's going to be one pain in the butt trying to pick one winner out of these. Anyways, next month is Cable cover month, so be here!

Till then, keep drawing

Let me see what you can do! Send your letters and questions to me, Bart Sears, at:

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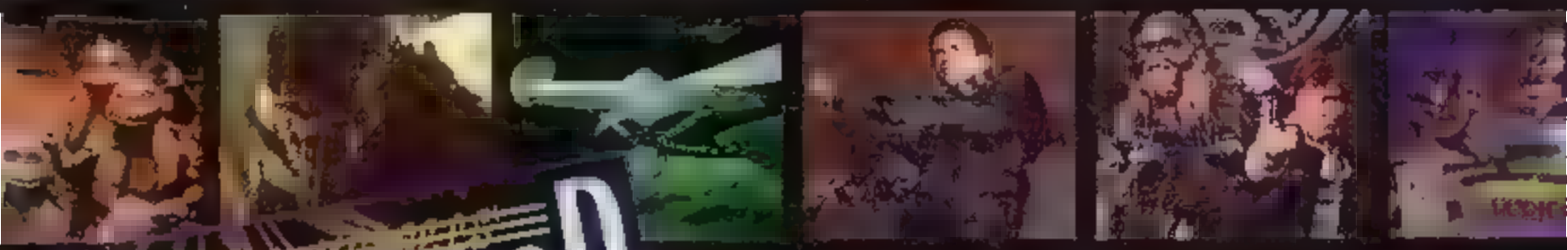

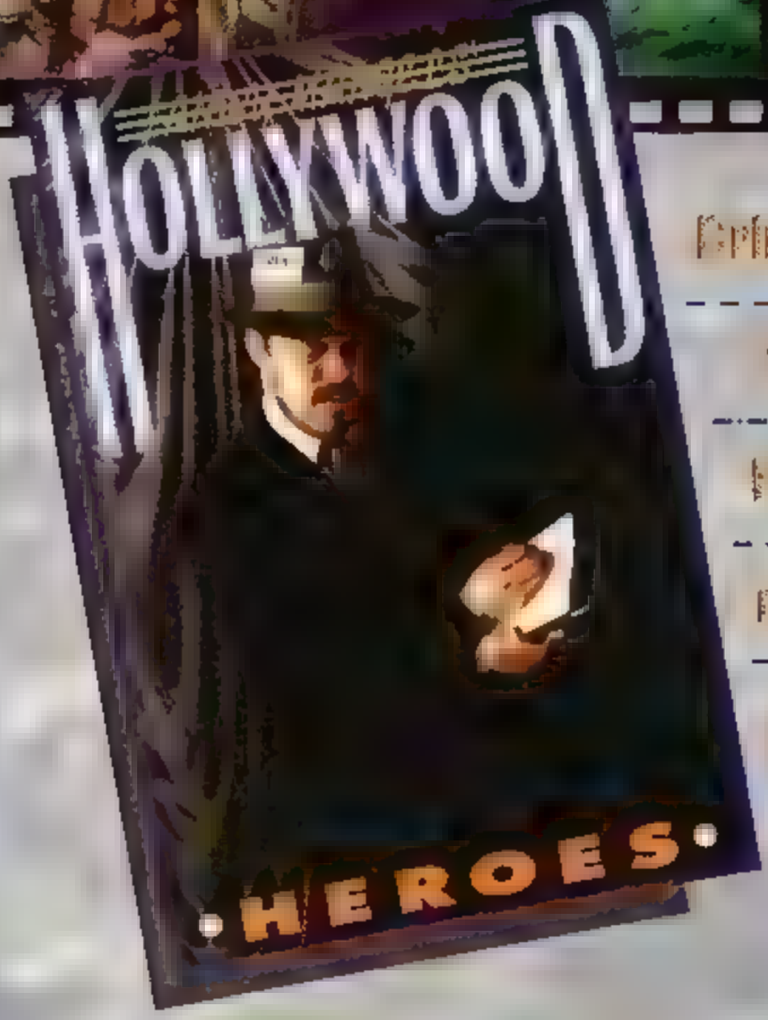

Bringing you the latest Hollywood news that you want to hear...

We're already three months into 1993. Can you believe it? Spring has sprung, bringing us the first of this year's comic book movies. Yes, I'm talking about *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: A Feudal Fable*. That's the focus of our special behind-the-scenes look and exclusive photos this month. But first, as always here at Hollywood Heroes, we'll fill you in on the latest exclusive scoops on upcoming TV shows and films! And remember, Hollywood Heroes carries the doctor recommended dosage of ten essential vitamins and minerals, when taken correctly!

TV NEWS

Another big news item this month features the return to life of the Man of Steel on the small screen! Prompted by interest in the comic book death of Superman, Lorimar and ABC put their collective heads together and worked out a deal for an all-new live-action *Superman* TV series! ABC recently put in the order for a two-hour *Superman* pilot film, now being written by Deborah Joy-Levine (*Equal Justice*), plus six one-hour episodes! Lorimar hopes to have the show ready for Fall airing. No casting has been done yet, but we'll let you know the moment more Super-information is available.

The leafy green Vertigo hero, Swamp Thing, continues his all-new adventures on USA Network this month. On March 6th, Swampy faces the biomechanical results of Arcane's experiments in "In The Beginning...," but survives to battle a murderous brother on the 13th's "Brotherly Love." A deadly elemental-powered panther is loose in Houma in "An Eye For An Eye" on the 20th, and young Joshua reappears (from the episode "Mist Demeanor") as a super-powered pirate in "Yo Ho Ho" on the 27th.

Fox's *X-Men* episodes are rolling in on time, meaning air dates should be firmed for a while. Although some reruns may be put in on this month's run of the show, all new episodes seem likely.

The final four *X-Men* episodes include "Come the Apocalypse" on March 6th, as Archangel and the other Four Horsemen are unleashed on the world by the big blue skull-faced guy. Then, prepare for "Days Of Future Past Parts I and II" on March 13th and 20th, as Bishop appears from a horrible future, chased by Nimrod. With news of a dire fate for mutantkind, Bishop's pronouncements only succeed in turning the X-Men against one another, while the real villain lurks in the background. To wrap this season up, all the mutants who've appeared on the series so far make "The Final Decision" on March 27th, in an all-out no-holds-barred battle against the Sentinels. Who will survive until next season? Only time and this episode will tell.

X-Men is a go for a second season. Though Fox has not yet ordered a full 13 new episodes, the order is expected by the time you read this.

Will CBS's *Space Rangers* last? The Wednesday night science fiction show hasn't been getting the attention or the ratings of either *Star Trek* show or *Time Trax*, and *Babylon 5* may crowd it out of the picture entirely. Plus, only six episodes were ordered by the network. Still, wasn't it nice to see a new sci-fi show on TV almost every night of the week?

Universal's *Exo-Squad* is being prepared for weekend airing this Fall. Robby Benson stars as the voice of Mace, a resistance-leader who leads a team of mecha-warriors in the 22nd Century. Thirteen episodes will air starting in September, with Universal offering 27 more for Fall

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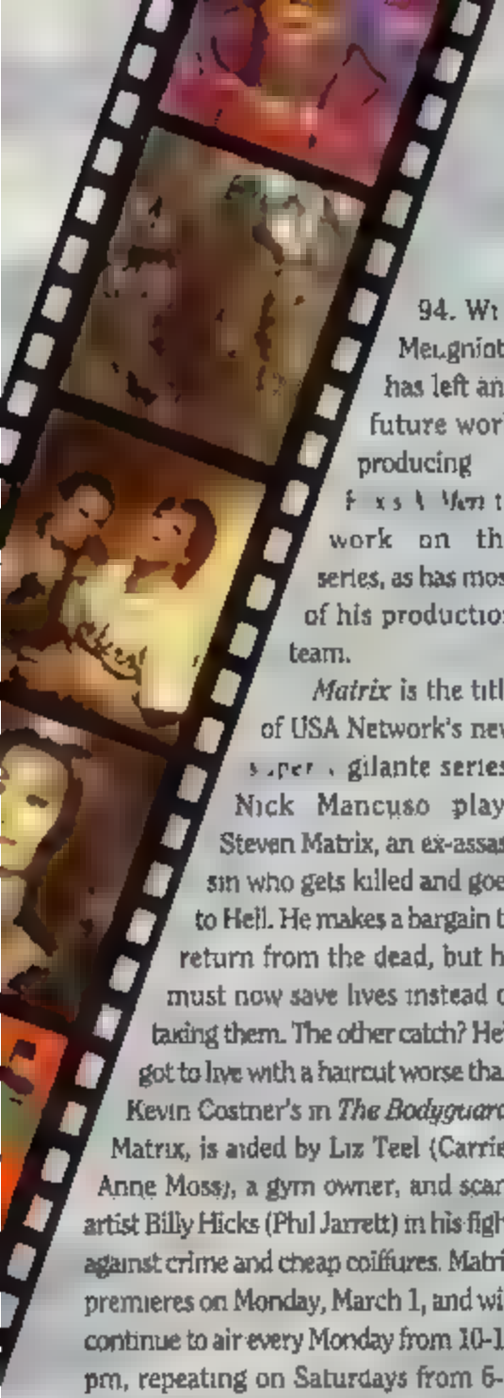

94. Will Meugniot has left any future work producing Fox's X-Men to work on the series, as has most of his production team.

Matrix is the title of USA Network's new super-vigilante series. Nick Mancuso plays Steven Matrix, an ex-assassin who gets killed and goes to Hell. He makes a bargain to return from the dead, but he must now save lives instead of taking them. The other catch? He's got to live with a haircut worse than Kevin Costner's in *The Bodyguard*! Matrix, is aided by Liz Teel (Carrie-Anne Moss), a gym owner, and scam artist Billy Hicks (Phil Jarrett) in his fight against crime and cheap coiffures. Matrix premieres on Monday, March 1, and will continue to air every Monday from 10-11 pm, repeating on Saturdays from 6-7 pm. Thirteen episodes are in the can.

On February 28th, watch the failing NBC make a ratings grab with the two-hour film pilot, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Columbia tried to sell the series last year; if ratings are good, NBC will probably pick it up for their fall schedule. F. Murray Abraham, Farrah Forke, and Kim Miyori star.

New World/Marvel's *Biker Mice From Mars* has finished its 13-episode commitment for Fall syndication. With a toy line coming from Galoob, insiders say that the series will need a decent time slot to be effective. The show is a goofy concept which two-to-six-year-olds should love. It is also the last animated project to have the Marvel Productions logo on it. Sharp viewers will notice that even the Marvel co-produced *X-Men* does not feature the Marvel Productions logo.

Hanna-Barbera's two new *Flintstones* specials will air on ABC this Spring. "I Yabba Dabba Doo" features the marriage of Pebbles and Bamm Bamm, while "Hollyrock A Bye Baby" features the birth of their child.

CBS has signed the *Fish Police* producer to develop new animated shows for them. Given the abysmal (should that be a-bass-mal?) floundering of *Fish Police* on the air, our local TV magazine asked how she got the job. After all, "*Fish Police* stank so much, CBS called its Friday failure 'Pet Cemetery Night.'"

Speaking of underwater disasters, NBC has landed Amblin/Universal's new futuristic *Sea Quest* series for fall 1993. The 22-episode show will star Roy Scheider (reteaming with his *Jaws* director Steven Spielberg for at least one episode) as a commander of a giant undersea laboratory in the year 2018.

Well, while I got the utterly-confusing potential Disney animated schedule right when I sent my column in last month, the typesetter didn't! Here's how the last of the paragraph should have read: The series version of *Aladdin*, sans the genie, will replace *TaleSpin* in fall '94 (not '95), while *Duck Daze* (starring Donald Duck) will replace *Darkwing Duck* in fall '95. Whew.

Stephen King's two TV projects at ABC are barrelling along. *Tommyknockers* recently finished filming, directed by Lewis Teague, from a script by Larry Cohen. *L.A. Law*'s Jimmy Smits and *China Beach*'s Marg Helgenberger lead the cast. Mick Garris, who directed King's *SleepWalkers*, will also direct the eight-hour mini-series of *The Stand*, written by King. *Tommyknockers* will air most likely during May sweeps, while *The Stand* will probably show up in either November this year, or next February.

Look for Hanna-Barbera's all new *Jonny Quest* tele-film, *Jonny's Golden Quest*, to air on USA on Sunday the 14th and Wednesday the 17th, from 7-9 pm. If this is successful, a new Quest movie may follow a couple of times a year!

Comic scribe and past DC editor Len Wein is now working away on the story bible for *Dinosaurs For Hire*, the Eternity series which looks like it may be on Fox's fall schedule! Look for a Saturday time slot if the show pulls through.

Look for Mad Dog, the hero "created" by Bob McKay (Bob Newhart on CBS's *Bob*), to star in his own real comic book mini-series, starting this month from Marvel! Ty Templeton and Evan Dorkin will show readers the two faces of Mad Dog, while none other than yours truly will provide text pages in issues #2-4! Buy 'em up quick.

Meanwhile, *Bob* itself had a visit from royalty at the end of January. Jack "King" Kirby — one of the most respected and loved artists in the comics world, and co-creator of most of the Marvel Universe — guest starred on "You Can't Win" on January 29th, in a show that took place at a comic-book convention! He wasn't the only guest, as Bob Kane, Mel Lazarus (from the comic strip, *Momma*), and Mel Keefer, guest-starred also. If you didn't catch it, watch for the rerun.

Speaking of reruns, after several new shows in February, look for only a couple of new *Bob* shows in March and April. They're saving the final episodes for May sweeps.

If you aren't watching CBS's *Picket Fences*, on Friday nights after *Bob*, you're missing the best series of the season. Forget about your allegiance to comic or sci-fi shows and tape this show! It's well worth it.

Superboy fans who wondered exactly what happened to John Haymes Newton, can look for him as both TinTin (not the Herge character) in Disney's plane-crash-survivors-turned-cannibal film, *Alive*, and as driver Tony Pagano every week on *The Untouchables*. Let's hope that Newton doesn't ask for a raise this time, or lie to any judges. On a gangster show like *The Untouchables*, he could be rubbed out easier than he was on *Superboy*.

Sean Martin's comic strip, Doc & Raider, which appears in the upcoming *Gay Comics* #18 (coming in April, edited by me!), is in negotiations as a Canadian sitcom for television. Canadian TV is much more liberal than any of the American networks. Good luck to Sean!

The Sci-Fi Channel's most interesting show, *Sci-Fi Series Collection*, spotlights the quasi-super-hero show, *The Invisible Man*, this month. David McCal-

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Lum is a research scientist who discovers the secret to invisibility and keeps it from the government and the bad guys. All 12 episodes of this 1975 show will air March 1st-16th, followed by the equally short-lived *Something Is Out There* from March 17th-April 1st.

Fox has changed the name of *Batman: The Animated Series* to *Batman: The Series*, for internal reasons. The final five new episodes are being held for May sweeps. Those include "Mudslide" with Clayface, the two-part "Shadow of the Bat," which introduces Batgirl, "Read My Lips," and "The Worry Men." March and April will most likely be all reruns.

Fox still hasn't signed for a second season of *Batman: TS*, though that decision looks both promising and imminent. Ditto for either the Catwoman or Robin spin-offs. However, work is continuing on the 70-90 minute *Batman: TS* film, now called "Masks." The story, spotlighting the Joker and a mysterious woman from Batman's past, is said by the publicist to be "very grown-up, very serious." *Batman: TS* "Masks" will be released on video this Christmas.

Whither the future of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*? Is it going off the air with the end of this season? Paramount has made no official statement, other than that all of the cast is up for renewal of contract. Negotiations are said to be ongoing. Paramount's not too worried, with the great ratings for *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

FEATURE FILMS

More *Wizard* exclusives on the upcoming *Fantastic Four* movie, in post production as you read this! As we told you last month, Roger Corman's Concorde Films and Neue Constantin Films are producing the movie, directed by Oley Sassoon (*Blood Fist 3*), from a script by Craig Nevius (*Happy Together*). The film tells the origin of the FF and their first encounter with Doctor Doom.

Shot in one month in Los Angeles, *Fantastic Four* stars a cast of semi-familiar faces, and several sons. Alex Hyde-White (son of *Buck Rogers'* Wilford Hyde-White) is Reed Richards, newcomer Rebecca Staab is Sue Storm, Michael Bailey Smith (*Silk Stalkings*) is Ben Grimm, and Jay Underwood (the son of Disney's *Not Quite Human* telefilms, *The Boy Who Could Fly*), is Johnny Storm. Carl Ciarfilio (a stuntman) is the Thing, in prosthetic makeup by Optic Nerves, and newcomer Kat Green is his blind girlfriend, Alicia Masters. Dr. Vincent Von Doom is Joseph Culp (Robert Culp's son).

Matrix *on the USA Network—Spawn's not the only one who came back from Hell as a superhero.*

Two new characters, an underground Penguin-like man called The Jeweller, who leads minions in the sewers (changed from The Mole Man) is played by Ian Trigger while Professor Comstock (Reed and Doom's physics professor) is played by George Gaynes (*Hearts Afire, Punky Brewster, Police Academy*).

Look for some computer-generated special effects with Reed and the Baxter Building, though Johnny doesn't flame on until the film's climax. However, you can probably bet the rent that we'll see lots of Sue's invisibility effects... or not see them, as the case may be. Costumes are designed after the Marvel Universe entries, with the white collar. Superhero code-names aren't used in the film emphasizing that this story really is their earliest adventure. We'll hope to have some exclusive *Fantastic Four* photos next issue!

Tim Burton's next live-action project is the biography of "B"movie man Ed Wood Jr., as I rumored here in earlier columns. Wood was responsible for the unforgettable *Glen Or Glenda*, and the unforgivable *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Burton wants his *Edward Scissorhands* star Johnny Depp to play the sometimes-transvestite film director.

Tundra Publishing has acquired a large amount of stock in Limelight Group, a production company that is already planning several Tundra-based films. In return for their investment, Tundra gets to choose any of Limelight's upcoming films and characters to become comic-book series.

One Tundra (and Caliber) book, Jim O'Barr's moody *The Crow*, is already film-

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ing in Los Angeles Alex Proyas is directing to a script by shock-meister David Schow and John Shirley, for Paramount. Brandon Lee (son of Bruce Lee) plays the title character. Insiders say that it is extremely faithful to the comic, and that the sets are fantastically moody and dark.

Jonathan Lawton, the man who scripted *Pretty Woman* and *Under Siege*, is working on two comic-oriented projects. He's rewriting John Lau's live-action *Speed Racer* film for Silver Pictures and Warner Brothers. *Speed Racer* will be produced by Richard Donner, and directed by Patrick Read Johnson in Australia and Japan later this year. Lawton is also doing "honors" on Howard Stern's upcoming *The Adventures of Fartman*, for New Line. He took a cut in scripting pay when they offered him the directing job. What stuns me more is that a movie like this actually has a budget of $8-10 million! Meanwhile, Lawton backed out of James Cameron's *Screaming Steel* script at Universal, leaving behind a lot of money and an unfinished script.

The long-near bankrupt Carolco is finally back in business, thanks to foreign investors and a hefty advance from MGM. What MGM gets in return is distribution on all Carolco films after Tri-Star's deal ends in January 1994. What this means for the fans is that James Cameron's *Spider-Man* film, long stalled due to Carolco's collapse, may finally be recharged. Don't hold your breath, but you might cross your fingers yet again.

Warner is counting on John Hughes star-studded *Dennis The Menace* to pull families into theatres this summer, but the adults will probably rather show up to see Harrison Ford star in the remake of *The Fugitive*, coming in August. It'll be following Arnold Schwarzenegger's *The Last Action Hero* (June 18th), and, of course, Universal's huge *Jurassic Park* film (coming June 11th).

Bob Evans, now working on the Sharon Stone horror film, *Sliver* (due May 21st), will begin work on his newest two "franchise films" this year.

The Saint and *The Phantom* are both hoped to roll, and possibly premiere, in 1993. Paramount will release all three films. Still no news on what role Roger Moore will play in *The Saint* remake.

Stephen King's *Rita Hayworth and The Shawshank Redemption* will have a couple of high-powered stars. Tim Robbins has been tapped to play Andy, a young banker wrongly imprisoned for killing his wife and her lover, while Morgan Freeman will star as Red, the "lifer" prisonmate of Andy. Filming begins any day now.

Two set-to-set films have been put on hold. Damon and Keenan Ivory Wayans comedy/super-hero film, *Blankman*, has been mired in quicksand at Columbia. Richard Donner, who was set to start shooting *Anne Rice's The Witching Hour* in February, was similarly stymied. Warner has let all the staff go and says that the film may start later this year.

Universal's going ahead on the long awaited *The Shadow*, but they've changed leading men. Jeremy Irons has dropped out of the picture, and Alec Baldwin has stepped into the coat and hat of the laughing crimebuster. Russel Mulcahey, who helmed *Highlander*, will direct the film from David Keopp's script, later this year in England. Universal is also moving ahead on *Green Hornet* yet again, though no immediate word on what or how.

Look for *The Addams Family II* on November 19th, again starring Raul Julia, Christopher Lloyd, and Anjelica Houston. A new cast addition will be a baby-sitter from Hell (no, it's not played by Amy Fisher), who may give Pugsley and Wednesday their match. Sequelitis hits in December too, when *Wayne's World II* hits the screens on the 10th.

Universal's long-planned *Flintstones* live-action film is finally back underway again. John Goodman is up for Fred Flintstone's role, while Rick Moranis makes a much-too-thin Barney Rubble.

© 1991 Paramount Pictures. Photo: Melinda Sue Gordon

The Addams Family returns to theatres this fall, this time plagued by a baby-sitter from Hell.

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Brian Levant (*Beethoven*) is slated to direct the odd stone-age couple.

Be sure to check out Robert Townsend's *The Meteor Man*, arriving in theatres this month. Townsend is brilliantly funny, and his take on the superhero genre should be a lot of fun.

Mel Brooks is filming his newest spoof in Los Angeles, a strange place for Sherwood Forest. Don't expect traditional antics in *Robin Hood: Men In Tights*, from the man who brought us "Springtime For Hitler." *Princess Bride* and *Dracula* heartthrob Cary Elwes stars in the lead, and Tracey Ullman plays an odd Maid Marian.

Don Bluth's animated *Thumbelina* may show up in theatres in June, if Bluth's bankruptcy proceedings allow. His other animated film, *A Troll In Central Park*, should also be released this summer.

Finally, remember to check out New Line's *Friday the 13th: Jason Goes To Hell*, the final Jason Vorhees film, in both the theatres, and in your comic-book stores. A much more intelligent horror movie than its eight predecessors, *Jason Goes To Hell* features a surprise ending that will leave the audience breathless. Check out the Topps Comics three-issue series, with lots of cool extras and trading cards. I am writing the script, while Cynthia Martin does the art honors!

VIDEO, THEATRE, & THEME PARKS

Annie Warbucks opens March 18th at the Neil Simon Theatre in New York. Now's your chance to see this long-awaited sequel.

Cathy, the comic strip that brought women's rib back to the dark ages with its neurotic fixated leading character, will soon be coming to video stores, courtesy of creator Cathy Guisewite and Republic Pictures. As if the strip weren't depressing enough, Guisewite is excited by the possibility of exploring Cathy's anxieties in more than "four little boxes in the newspaper."

Full Moon Entertainment's March video release through Paramount is *Robot Wars*, a stop-motion robot film from the creators of *Robot Jox*. Don Michael Paul, James Stanle, and Lisa Rinna star as late 21st century rebels fighting against the government. New Age composer David Arkenstone supplies the soundtrack.

Full Moon's also recently completed work on their first team-up film. Coming later this year is the small-time film of *Dollman Vs. Demonic Toys*! Also in production is *Invisible*, a video film about a man who uses his invisibility serum to fight crime. Another Full Mooner is *Mandroid*, about a man who becomes one with an indestructible android. Why do these plots sound familiar?

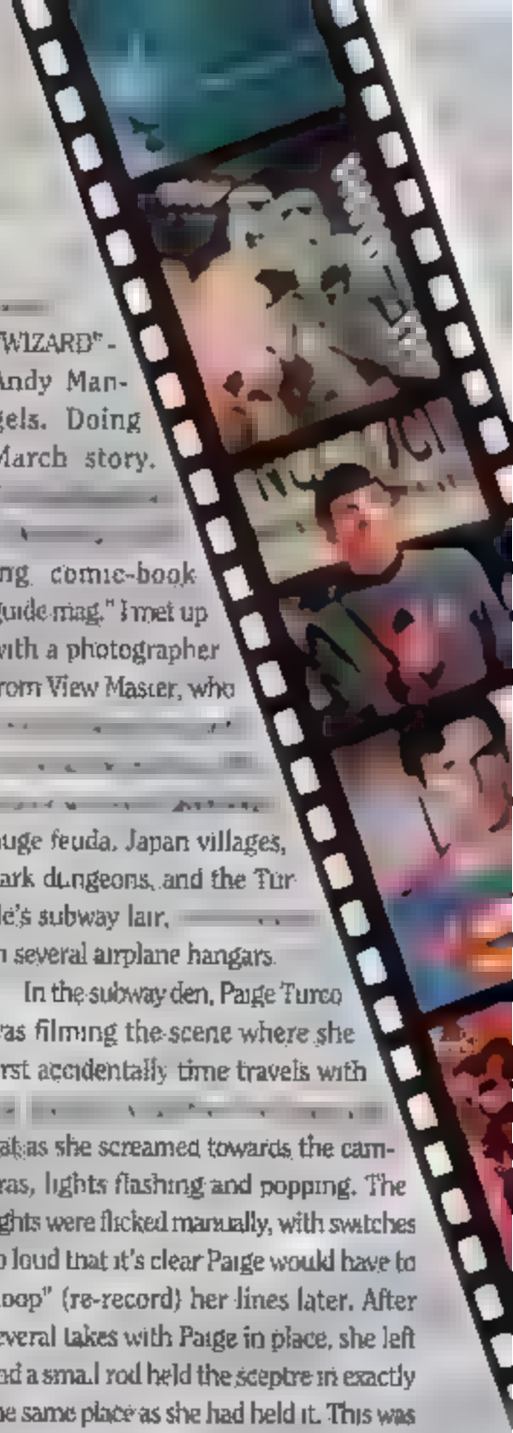
TURTLE TIME TRAVEL

The coastal town of Astoria, Oregon played host to a variety of odd creatures this past Fall, when the crew for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: A Feudal Fable*, brought their movie to town. Outside the fence ringing the abandoned military base, locals could watch as Leonardo and Donatello did horseback battle with ancient Samurais, and time-travelled to rescue their friends.

Turtles III is the latest in a line of success for the creations of Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird. The green pizza-loving mutants have long been a favorite with kids, but director and screenwriter Stuart Gillard is hoping to bring in the older audience with his more sophisticated story and adult themes. Readers will have a chance to judge for themselves when *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: A Feudal Fable* goes to theatres on March 19th.

In the script, originally called "The Sacred Scroll of Death," a scroll in Feudal Japan in 1603 displays four turtle demons dying in a civil war. How can it come true, when we see our four heroes in the present, sharing a good time in their underground lair with April O'Neil? Well, it all has to do with a mystic scepter and hourglass that sends April (Paige Turco, returning) back to 1603, and brings a feudal warrior named Kenji (Henry Hayashi) to the present. Now the Turtles have to travel back in time to save April from the evil Daimyo (Sab Shimono, while Casey Jones (Elias Koteas, also returning), Kenji, and Splinter stop four feudal warriors from creating havoc in modern day New York.

The day I arrived on set, the press sheet



"WIZARD" - Andy Mangels. Doing March story.

ing comic-book guide mag." I met up with a photographer from View Master, who

huge feuda, Japan villages, dark dungeons, and the Turtle's subway lair, in several airplane hangars.

In the subway den, Paige Turco was filming the scene where she first accidentally time travels with

hat as she screamed towards the cameras, lights flashing and popping. The lights were flicked manually, with switches so loud that it's clear Paige would have to "loop" (re-record) her lines later. After several takes with Paige in place, she left and a small rod held the sceptre in exactly the same place as she had held it. This was filmed with the same wind and light effects, allowing them to optically fade Paige out on film. The scene with Kenji appearing would be filmed after lunch.

Opposite the subway was a large castle wall with a trap door, which the Turtles would hurtle through later in the film. But where were the Turtles now? They were out on the runway, filming a scene where they're in full samurai garb, riding horses, and fighting their way through warring hordes! Right now, the shots are being set up, and three Turtle actors (only Mark Caso returns to his role as Leonardo from *Turtles II*) are suiting up. They put on their heads and mouthpieces last, as they are heavy and hot, and they almost completely restrict vision, hearing, and breathing.

On the outskirts, waiting for the scene to start, ride several of the warriors on

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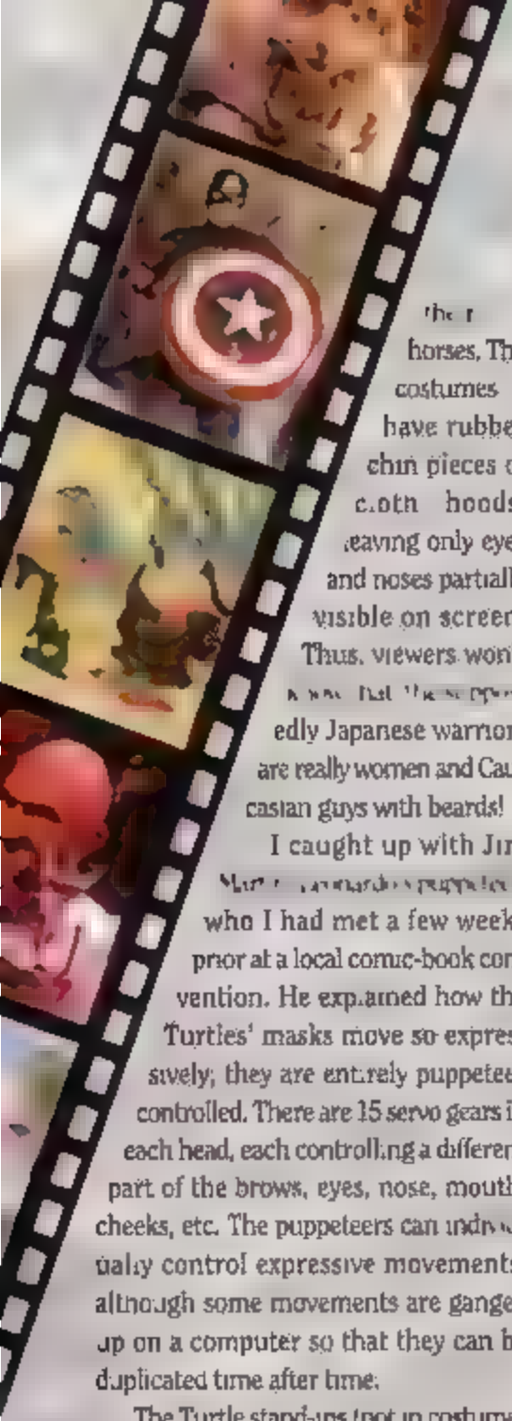


their horses. The costumes have rubber chin pieces of cloth hoods, leaving only eyes and noses partially visible on screen. Thus, viewers won't know that the supposedly Japanese warriors are really women and Caucasian guys with beards!

I caught up with Jim Martin, Leonardo's puppeteer, who I had met a few weeks prior at a local comic-book convention. He explained how the Turtles' masks move so expressively; they are entirely puppeteer controlled. There are 15 servo gears in each head, each controlling a different part of the brows, eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, etc. The puppeteers can individually control expressive movements, although some movements are ganged up on a computer so that they can be duplicated time after time.

The Turtle stand-ins (not in costume) sit atop three saddles, meant to appear on film as if they're on horses. When all is ready, the Turtles actors slip on their heads, mindful of the cables and the headsets they use to talk to the puppeteers, and mount the odd saddle contraptions. As adjustments are made, a female technician gives one of the Turtles a blast of cool air through his mask's mouth, from a converted blow-dryer. Prop guys hold the silver-painted wooden swords nearby, so the Turtles don't drop them.

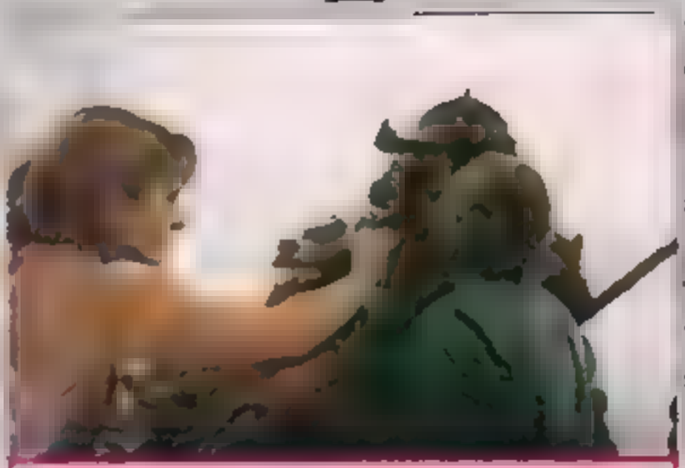
The scene is one in which the Turtles, having lost Michaelangelo, must escape the other warriors on the battlefield (which is actually an overgrown riverside field). The film truck, containing the puppeteers, cameras, director, and several crew members, pulls the trailer — on which the Turtles and saddles are mounted — far out into the field. The warrior riders are cued to either side of the road the truck will be coming down.

The truck begins a running start, fake smoke billowing from its front grill (to simulate general battle-dust) and from the bottom of the trailer (to simulate horse-hoof-dust). The turtles brandish their swords, swaying about on the fake saddles, as riders criss-cross the pathway behind them.

When cut together with other already-filmed scenes of stunt Turtles on horseback, this segment of the film will actually make it appear that the Turtles are on horseback in a war in feudal Japan. With all of the jiggling and bouncing from the "horses," and the smoke and dust, most of the work of the puppeteers will be lost, but their work must still be precise.

The scene is reshot twice more before the director calls for the lunch break. It's taken almost two hours to set up and shoot this small segment of film, and after lunch, it's back for more battle scenes. For me, it'll be a trip to the costume shop and a visit with the men who make Splinter move and talk. But you'll have to come back next month for that. We've run out of space, but we'll have more exclusive behind-the-scenes coverage and photos next month!

Thanks for joining me for Hollywood Heroes, the most complete news column sic-fi/fantasy/superhero/horror news column on the planet. Be back here next month for more exciting news, reviews, exclusives, and the second part of our behind-the scenes look at *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: A Feudal Fable*! See you in April!



A radical cure for Ninja halitosis? Nah, just Turtle stuntmen keeping their cool.

Preparing the Turtles for their flight across the battlefield from the warriors who abducted Michaelangelo.

The Turtles' underground HQ in modern day New York, or an unfinished set (or both?).

CREDITS: TMNT II © Northshore Investments Ltd. Photo: John Bramley ... America™ Marvel Entertainment Group. Ren & Stimpy ... 3 Nickelodeon. Nightmare on Elm Street 3 © New Line ... rved. Photo by Michael Lesinov. Thor™ 1993 Marvel Group

FOUR-COLOR CULTURE

Minority Diversity in Comics

by William Christensen and Mark Seifert

Comic books today are the American Dream in four colors: anyone can come here and make it big with a little talent and a lot of luck. Conversely, the industry is wide open to influences from outside its boundaries. You're likely to encounter characters and concepts from any number of cultures when you read an American comic today.

It hasn't always been easy that way. Comics have been a part of our culture for about 60 years. During that time our society has changed from being fearful of those it considers outsiders to an attitude of eagerly accepting different people and new ideas. Comics have reflected this change.

The Transition Period (1947-1954)

Stereotypes have been around in comics for almost as long as comics themselves have been present in society. Stereotypes based on ethnic origin, sex, age and pretty much any other way one person can distinguish himself from another have all been used, and have never been more prevalent than they were in the late 1940s and early '50s.

This pivotal period in comic art development falls between World War II and the formation of the Comics Code Authority in 1954. During this time, there were many forces, both external and internal to the comic publishing industry influencing what was seen on the comic page.

During World War II, women played a visible role in society. They continued to do so after the war ended. This led to a variety of paradoxical situations in comics. Lois Lane was the best reporter at the Daily Planet, yet was still more interested in winning Superman's heart than in winning the Pulitzer Prize. Catwoman became one of Batman's greatest villains during this period, but still more just to catch Batman's eye than because she needed the bucks. And yes, Hawkgirl got equal time with Hawkman, but only so she could get captured and be rescued at the end of the story. Of course, there was also a seemingly limitless number of "working girl" characters appearing at this time including Millie the Model, Tessie the Typist and Nellie the Nurse.

The archetypal female comics character, Wonder Woman, was created by psychologist William Moulton Marston to star in stories that were parables of what women's role in society was at the time. As such, the Wonder Woman stories of this period were purposefully stereotypical. The Amazons referred to the world outside Paradise Island as Man's World, and Wonder Woman would lose her powers if she allowed a man to bind her wrists together. Still, we started to see women more and more as characters and less and less as plot devices.

At about this same time, teenagers were becoming a well defined social, political and above all, consumer group. Though we don't usually think of teens as a minority, they are surely pigeonholed, stereotyped, and generally tormented as a group as much as any other. Archie's tagline as "America's Typical Teenager" bears out how adults often thought about this particular group. Interestingly, kid groups were also some of the last refuges of ethnic caricatures. Kid gangs like the Boy Commandos and Newsboy Legion were very likely to have a wide variety of cultures represented among their members, and those members were equally as likely to be portrayed in a unjust fashion.

During the war, comics were preoccupied with fighting the Nazis, who were usually caricatured to the point of looking more like aliens than humans. American society was so consumed by hatred for the Germans, Italians, and Japanese that this was found perfectly acceptable. Some of this sentiment spilled over to the post-war period. For the most part, though, this time was characterized by an astonishing lack of depiction of ethnic groups of any type.

By the time the early 1950's rolled around, both comics and American culture had forgotten their war-time villains and turned their attention to the Cold War. Sure, the occasional plot to bring Hitler back to life was still uncovered, but for the most part the villain behind all wrong-doing became "the unseen Red menace." This political evil lasted for some time, occasionally appearing well into the '60s. By this time, possibly as an indirect result of the political pressure being brought to bear on the industry to be more responsible to its target audience, ethnic caricatures finally all but vanished.

After the Code, the depiction of graphic violence was not allowed in comics. This left some comic publishers without much to publish. Many of them closed their doors at this time. Those who survived the transition period began to turn from sensationalism to substance. With that change came characters with more than one dimension such as the Fantastic Four and Spider-Man. It's no coincidence that at this time comics began showing the first signs of using supporting characters as individuals and not simply plot devices or props.

The Silver Age Minority

The first minority hero didn't show up until 1966, when the Black Panther leaped onto the scene in *Fantastic Four* #52. He was the only black hero in comics until the Falcon teamed with Captain America for *Cap* #117 in 1969. DC's most visible

Shadowcat ™ & © 1993 Marvel Comics

black character has been John Stewart who, after only a few appearances (his first being *Green Lantern* #87) in the '70s and '80s, went on to become one of the most active members of the Green Lantern Corps.

The Falcon and John Stewart were the first black heroes who were not labeled as such. Many early black heroes had names starting with "Black." This trend continued well into the late '70s, with Marvel's Black Goliath in 1975 and DC's Black Lightning in 1977. These were times when having a story with black characters was merely a novelty (think back to some of the television shows created at the time). The fact that the character was black was often more important than what his other qualities were.

Jewish characters play prominent roles in many titles. Kitty Pryde has been a starting player for the X-Men

Women gained a bit of equal time during the Silver Age as well. Characters like Supergirl, Black Canary, and Hawkgirl (now Hawkwoman) developed into positive role models, instead of merely being plot complications. Women were still depicted in a somewhat formulaic fashion by the male-dominated industry that chronicled their adventures, but headway was being made.

Unfortunately, the growing spotlight on black and female characters became an important and useful part of their identities.

Marvel's Master of Kung Fu is a good example of such a character. Shang Chi was born and trained in the People's Republic of China. His adventures usually centered around his struggle to topple his father's criminal empire in China. Shang Chi first appeared in *Special Marvel Edition* #15 and he quickly took over that title, which carried his name until it ended in issue #125 in 1983.

The former Avenger Mantis also has an identity inseparable from her ethnic origins. Born in Vietnam, she was raised from a very early age by an offshoot sect of the alien Kree race. They felt her cultural individuality was so important that they returned her to Vietnam once she became an adult, complete with false memories of having grown up there. Mantis made her debut in 1973 in *Avengers* #112.

The State of the Art

The new X-Men team introduced in *Giant-Sized X-Men* #1 was in many ways a prototype for some of today's most popular titles. One of the more interesting ways this is so is in the portrayal and interaction of a culturally diverse group of characters.

The original team consisted of several ethnically different characters such as an American Indian (Thunderbird), a Russian (Colossus), an Asian (Sunfire) and an African (Ororo). The title centered around how these very different people argued, played and worked together, as much as or more than it centered around their actual adventures. In the Marvel Universe the plight of the mutants trying to gain acceptability among humans has become symbolic of the struggle of those outside the mainstream fighting to get inside in our own culture. This model proved to the industry that minority characters of all kinds could be handled maturely with a great deal of popular success.

Many characters of all backgrounds have reaped the benefits of the prosperity of this ground-breaking team. The X-Men themselves and Marvel's other mutant teams have continued to boast an astonishing array of characters such as Banshee (Irish), Wolfsbane (Scots), Mirage and Warpath (American Indian), Nightcrawler (German), Kitty Pryde (Jewish), Wolverine (Canadian) and Northstar and Aurora (French-Canadian). Soon other teams applied this successful formula. DC's Global Guardians included Israeli, Brazilian, Japanese, Greek, Danish, and Irish members, among others. Teams such as these turned the trickle of ethnic characters that appeared in comics up until the mid-'70s into a virtual torrent.

In much the same way that blacks and women developed into important comic characters through the Silver Age and 1970s, many other types have been

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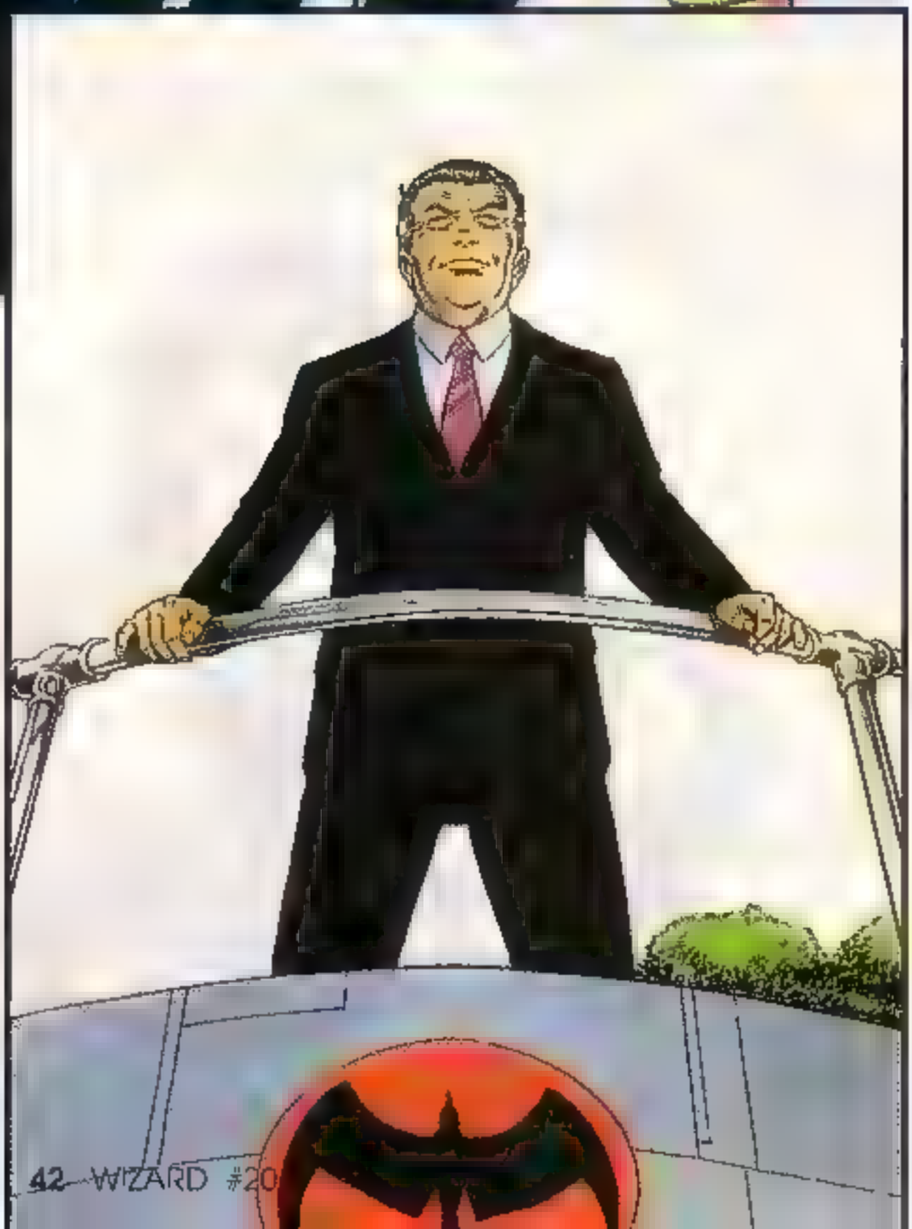
THE PLIGHT OF THE MUTANTS HAS BECOME SYMBOLIC OF THE STRUGGLE OF THOSE FIGHTING TO GET INSIDE OUR OWN CULTURE.



Todd Harris™ & © 1993 Valiant/Voyager Communications

displaying similar development in the '80s and '90s.

Bolstered by earlier characters such as the Mandarin, Sunfire, and Shang Chi, Master of Kung-Fu, Asian characters and concepts have rapidly gained widespread use in American comics recently. Heroes such as Valiant's Rai and Marvel's Elektra (yes, she's Greek, but she studied in Japan!) borrow heavily from Japanese culture, for example. Beyond the oriental martial-arts mayhem introduced in 1973 in *Master of Kung Fu* and popularized by Elektra in the mid-80s, American comics, like most Americans, seem fascinated by the Asian culture itself. This is demonstrated by the huge amount of Japanese-originated material publishers such as Dark Horse and Marvel's Epic translate and publish in the US each year. Surely under such an influence Asian characters will continue to flourish here.

Jewish characters play prominent roles in many titles. Kitty Pryde, who first appeared in *Uncanny X-Men* #129 in 1980, has been a starting player for the X-Men and a charter member of Excalibur as well as sharing a mini-series with Wolverine in 1984. Marvel's Moon Knight is another good example of such a character, and a complex one as well. Introduced in *Werewolf by Night* #32 in 1975, Marc Spector was the son of Rabbi Elias Spector. During his younger years, he lived his father's way of life. He later traveled the world over as a mercenary, eventually winding up in Egypt, where he adopted the Moon Knight identity. His origin is therefore a combination of many backgrounds, containing Jewish and Egyptian elements among others. He has headlined three separate series throughout the '80s and '90s.

American Indians are also making their presence felt. The X-Men's original Thunderbird, the New Mutants' Mirage, Alpha Flight's Shaman, X-Force's Warpath, and Valiant's Turok can all count themselves among today's hottest characters. With X-Force's continued popularity and Turok's own series

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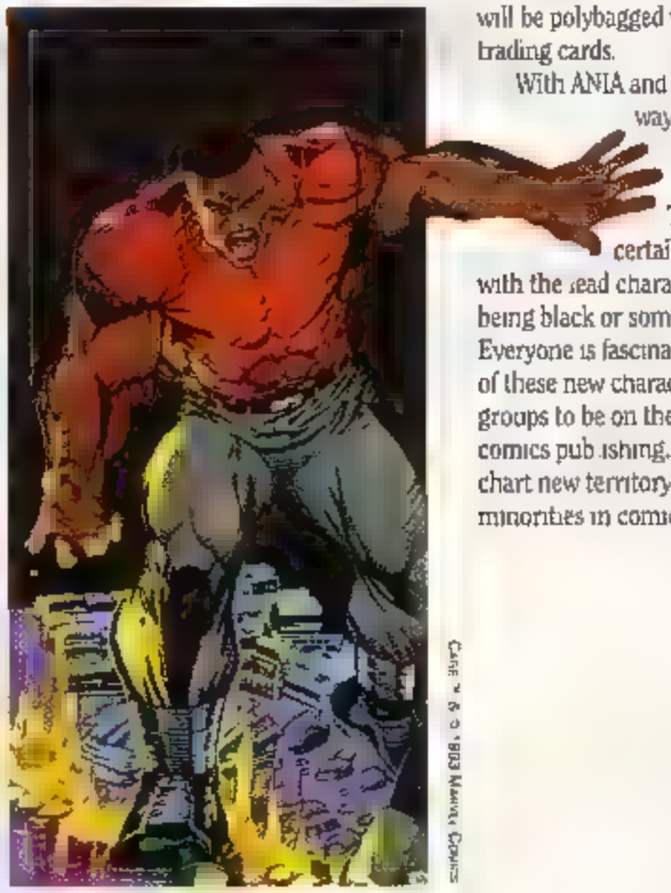
upcoming, expect to see even more Native American influences in comics in the future.

The widespread use of ethnic and other minorities has been a long process, and one which is still continuing today. As society's values continue to change, so does the use of minority heroes in comics. Black characters like Deathlok, Cage and Shadowman received regular titles, Bishop joined the X-Men, and John Stewart headlines *Green Lantern*. *Mosaic* Jewish characters such as Kitty Pryde and Moon Knight appear in books on a monthly basis, as do Hispanic characters like X-Force's Sunspot and Living Lightning of the Avengers West Coast. Comic readers can expect even more evolution along these lines from the formation of both Milestone Media (marketed as a DC imprint) and ANIA. These groups will push mainstream comics to new heights of cultural diversity.

THE WIDESPREAD USE OF ETHNIC AND OTHER MINORITIES HAS BEEN A LONG PROCESS, AND ONE WHICH IS STILL CONTINUING TODAY.

1992 saw the formation of two coalitions of black comic creators: ANIA and Milestone Media. Milestone Media was formed by Dwayne McDuffie, Denys Cowan, Derek Dingle, and Michael Davis to publish realistic comics about black characters by blacks. Milestone Media has reached an agreement with DC Comics whereby Milestone's work will initially be published by DC. All of the members of Milestone have come from long careers in the comic-book business and their combined talents should produce some great books. According to Dwayne McDuffie, the editor-in-chief of Milestone, there are tons of exciting things happening with this coalition. Many licenses are in the works but the first will be the trading card set of Milestone characters coming in June from Skybox. McDuffie said one of the group's top priorities is shipping books on time. Milestone derived their name from a general feel of how important this group would be, a true milestone in the comic business.

ANIA is the Association of Black Comic Book Publishers. ANIA is not an acronym but actually an African word that means "to protect and defend." All of the members have been publishing black comics underground and have not gotten much mainstream attention until recently. By forming this group, the publishers hope they can collectively reach an audience that no single publisher could. The publishers represented are Dark Zulu Lies, African Rising, AfroCentric Books, Up Comics, Hype Comics, Omega Seven, and Bedford/Stuyvestant Underground Press. The initial reaction to ANIA has been strong according to Erik Griffen, the president of ANIA. With not a single book published, they have been the feature of several newspaper articles and a February CNN special. A television cartoon is already in pre-production, and a Comic Images trading card set is scheduled for April release. Whew! The trading cards will have a ton of cool people doing art including Andy Kubert, Bart Sears, Erik Larsen, and Lee Weeks. While ANIA certainly has some very lofty goals, they seem very confident of achieving them. Griffen was very reassuring that ANIA will be publishing high quality books and shipping them on time. ANIA also has plans to enter the mass-market with an Anco deal similar to those Marvel and Image have. This will give stores like Wal-Mart access to their comics, but significantly after they have been on the direct market. The books themselves will start shipping in April and the first issues will be polybagged with Erik Larsen trading cards.



Cage™ & © 1993 Marvel Comics

With ANIA and Milestone leading the way, it seems that the cultural prejudice of old is fading fast. These books will certainly break new ground with the lead characters in all the titles being black or some other minority. Everyone is fascinated by the possibilities of these new characters so watch for these groups to be on the cutting edge of black comics publishing. They're certain to chart new territory for the use of all minorities in comics. ★

Thirty-five years ago, at the beginning of the Silver Age of comics, non-white characters were as scarce as hens' teeth. Then, particularly at Marvel, they began to show up in crowd scenes and as supporting characters; the big breakthrough is generally thought to be the premiere of the Black Panther in the pages of *Fantastic Four*.

That started a trend, as more and more black characters showed up— usually with "black" as a prominent part of their names, as though the readers wouldn't be sure of their skin color without being prompted: Black Goliath, Black Lightning, you get the picture. And when they weren't named as black, they were stereotyped, instead: Luke Cage, Hero for Hire, or the revamped "hip" origin for the Falcon, or the angry young man portrayal of John Stewart, the Green Lantern (who was even sometimes called "Black Lantern").

And it hasn't changed much in the past 20 years. But now a group of comics creators is trying to break that mold, with a new line of "multicultural" characters and comic books. *Wizard* talked to the principals of Milestone Media—president Derek Dingle, editor-in chief Dwayne McDuffie, and creative director Denys Cowan—about their history and the unique situation Milestone is in.

Marking Milestone

BY PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

WIZARD: How did you get together to become Milestone Media?

DINGLE: Basically, Milestone Media is an outgrowth of what Denys and I started as children. We were classmates, we read comics together—and when we read comics, we found a paucity of black characters.

COWAN: We didn't use words like "paucity" back then.

WIZARD: [laughter] I can just hear you at 12, "There's a paucity of black characters here, Derek!"

DINGLE: The vocabulary all came from reading comic books.

We started creating our own characters, as a lot of fans did, and they reflected ourselves and our experiences. Fast-forward 20 years later. Denys became a very accomplished artist in the comic-book field. I stayed in publishing management; Denys, along with Michael Davis and Dwayne McDuffie, decided there was a need to establish a line of black comic-book characters...and then they expanded from that to multicultural comics. In order to preserve this idea, and to protect it, they needed a company and someone with experience in publishing. That's when they called me. That was two years ago.

We spent a year talking to DC about the mechanics of building a partnership, where we would create the characters, and DC would help us with the printing and distribution. That grew into a licensing arrangement, where DC would also help us with the merchandising of the characters. It afforded us the opportunity to have the control and maintain our creative voice. We have total creative control in terms of what we produce for Milestone...

COWAN: The content of the books.

It's also important to point out that no deal like this has ever been done in comics. The only models that we could find are the shops that were set up in the 1930s and '40s—Eisner-Iger, for example—and those were straight production deals. The companies—with the exception of Eisner's *Spirit*—owned the characters outright. They just hired these guys to do the work. They did it at a phenomenal rate, in terms of volume. But that's the only model we could refer to.

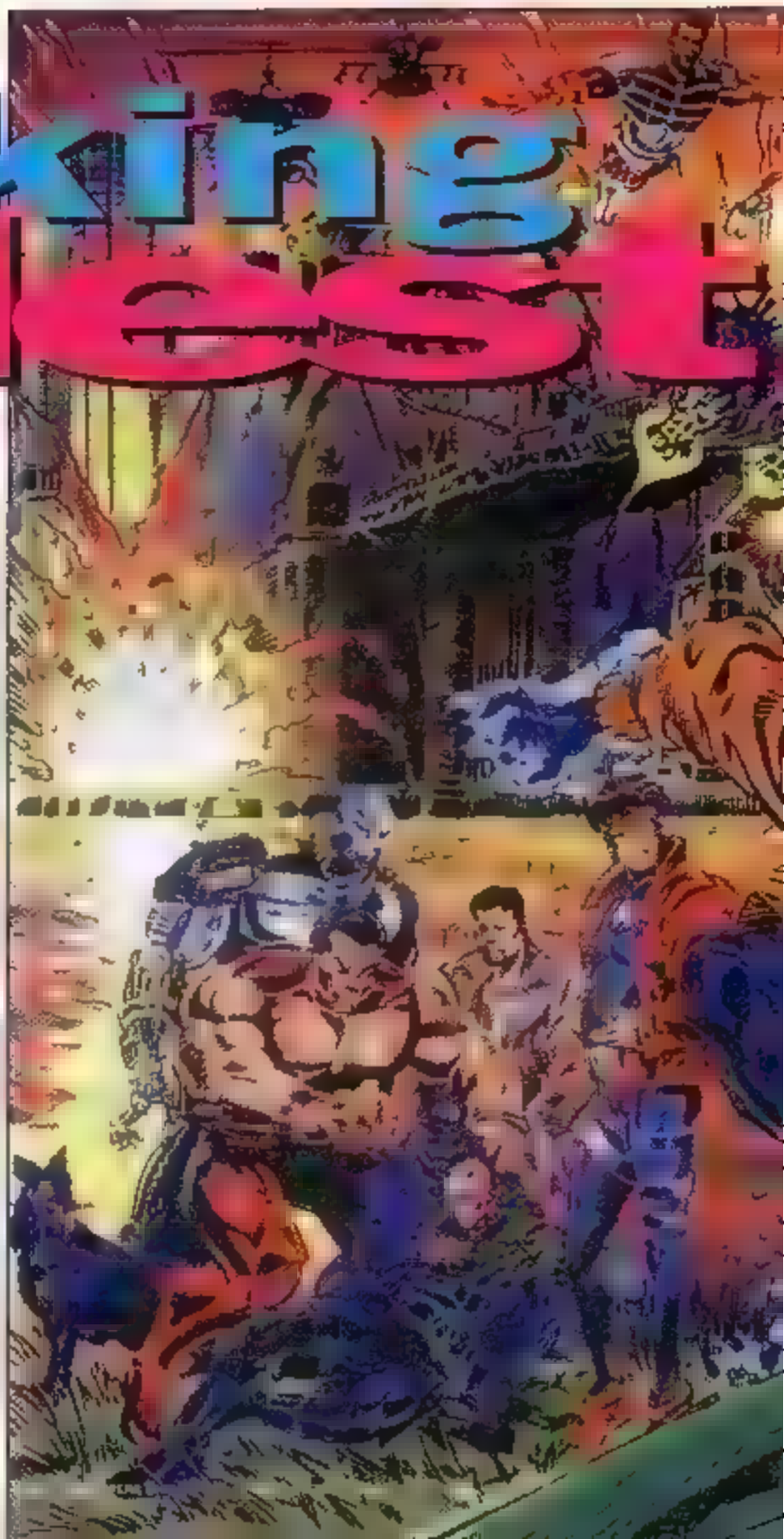
From what I understand, since we did this, others have set up similar arrangements. But I think we're the best.

WIZARD: How did you get in on this, Dwayne?

COWAN: Dwayne's a genius.

McDUFFIE: Basically, I was working with Denys on *Deathlok*; we did the Prince comic for DC, I enjoyed working with him a great deal.

Like every other creator of color in the business, in a mainstream Marvel-DC sort of world, I've sat around and



thought, "Man, it would be really great if I could do a character like this the way I *want* to." For me, the issue was definitely control of the character. I didn't want to get into a situation where I created something that was very close to me, gave it to one of the Big Two, and have some editor come along in a year and a half and tell me, "No, that's not what this character's about. You're wrong—don't do it that way." This is so close to our hearts, it's extremely important that we control it, that we be able to protect our creative vision.

Once we set this up, we provided a place where other people can come in and do their characters. I really see this as the first step. The city and the universe is designed so that other guys can plug in. There have to be lots of guys out there going "Oh, c'mon." I want them to come in here and say, "You're doing it all wrong. You're not speaking to me. You know nothing about my life; let me tell you what my heroic fantasies are, let me tell you who I am." I want to see more women come in here and do that. I want to see more Hispanics come in here and do that.

When everybody plugs in, we'll have this really interesting, rich world that isn't the same as the superhero worlds we have already. Those worlds are very homogeneous.

DINGLE: As you diversify your product in your line of books, you also diversify the creators that do the books, so that they are true to our multicultural thrust and we will have a multicultural team putting the books together.

McDUFFIE: There's a sense of validation you get when you see yourself or people like you in a work of fiction. As a young black kid, when I saw *I Spy*, I said, "Wow."

COWAN: There was Bill Cosby—it was great!

McDUFFIE: "Wow—I can be a hero! I can be the *smart* one!"

WIZARD: Let me play devil's advocate for a minute: Couldn't you be charged with saying that only black writers and artists can create good black characters? Only Asian artists and writers can create good Asian characters? Etcetera, etcetera?

McDUFFIE: Sure, we could. But that would be inaccurate.

You have to have a sensitivity toward the material, and you have to have some knowledge of what you're writing about. I think I'm a good writer; I think it would be foolish

for me to write a book about a Native American character who lives in Wisconsin—because I don't know anything about it. There are black writers who do know a lot about it and could carry it off. Odds are that an Indian from Wisconsin would have a better idea where to start. Whether or not he would have the skills to pull off the writing is a completely different question, but he would certainly bring something to the work that hasn't been there before.

One of the stronger arguments for what we're doing is that I don't think it's Marvel or DC's responsibility to provide stories about African-American males. It's an area of interest to me—but it's not their job. It's my job.

COWAN: It's not where they're coming from, either.

McDUFFIE: People write about themselves. Basically fundamentally, no matter what character you're writing, there has to be a core of you in it. When you're writing heroic fiction, you're usually talking about an idealized version of yourself. And since comics is pretty much white guys, comic-book superheroes are 95 percent white guys...or their fantasies of what blacks or Asians or, God knows, women—

COWAN: —want to be like.

You have to understand that, historically, black characters in comics—especially the ones that we were reading in the '70s—came out of a whole era of "blaxploitation" movies. Particularly Luke Cage, and even the Black Panther to some extent. I think they were created as a way of picking up on a trend...

I don't want it to be a world where you can pop over to Reed Richards' lab and borrow a time machine. I want it to be that when you see a man fly, it's the most amazing thing you've ever seen.

WIZARD: ...and as we all know, once comic books have picked up a trend, the trend is already over.

COWAN: Right. It was also on the tail-end of a whole lot of "black awareness" that was going on at the same time—except, unfortunately, the major comic-book companies didn't involve any black people in this process. What you ended up with was this sort of skewed vision of black characters based on what they saw in "blaxploitation" movies...

McDUFFIE: Second-hand

WIZARD: Third-hand, almost.

McDUFFIE: It's as if to write a black character you got a guy who went to see *Cooley High*—and if he retained 90 percent of what he got in *Cooley High*, it's still second-hand. I don't retain 90 percent of the movies I see, and I certainly wouldn't want to get my entire knowledge base of any culture from any particular movie or the four books I read—because even if I do good research, it's gonna be cold. It'll be clinical.

If I base it on my buddy who I grew up with, all of whose hopes and dreams I know, it'll be better. If my buddy writes it, better still

DINGLE: The difference with Milestone—and Denys talked about the trend—is that we're dealing with reality in terms of the growing demographics of this country. The environment that we have created is multicultural. I think that's important. We're talking about something that is reality-based, if you will. We're not talking about a world that is entirely black or entirely Asian; we're talking about a world of many different cultures and ethnic groups who interact on a class and social level

Beyond that, we are talking about high entertainment-value, superheroic adventure comics.

WIZARD: You're not trying to create a black studies class in comics.

McDUFFIE: Really, what it comes down to—speaking as the writer of *Hardware*—I'm not asking you to like Hardware because he's black, I'm asking you to like Hardware because he's interesting. It has to live or die on the characters and on the stories—on that appeal

Some people who wouldn't pick up *Spider-Man* or *Superman* might pick up *Hardware* because, "Wow! I didn't know a black guy could be an engineer and a superhero and invent all these things—and not be the sidekick." But they're not going to stay because of those things; they're going to stay because the guy is interesting and they want to know what happens next.

BLOOD SYNDICATE

Determined to settle the turf wars among the street gangs of Dakota's Paris Island slum, the gangs meet to battle it out in "the big bang." But the authorities, also determined to end the violence, have their own ideas—including the use of a radioactive gas to "mark" the gang members. But it backfires: The gas kills all but two percent of the gangsters—and the two percent develop superhuman abilities. The super-powered survivors band together as Blood Syndicate.

DINGLE: I was going through our pages and reading what was created by Milestone, I saw the same magic moments—or felt the same majesty—as when I picked up *The New Gods*, which was the first comic book I ever bought. They had certain moments and it talked to me, because it was just good comic book making, good storytelling. I think that's the foundation for Milestone.

COWAN: It's also the same majesty that I felt when the Fantastic Four fought the Black Panther and the Panther beat them all. He beat them all. And, as a kid, that was terrific—because everything I'd seen up to that point showed me that black characters...the few that existed...couldn't even walk down the same street, much less beat the Fantastic Four. That lesson stuck with me and was very powerful.

WIZARD: How did you work out the central core of the Milestone characters?

COWAN: We all got into a restaurant—that's no longer open, because we put it out of business by just sitting and drinking Coca-Cola and not ordering any food—and we sat around and created this universe.

McDUFFIE: Everybody talked about what they wanted to see and then I kept backing us up and saying, "Okay, conceptually, what are we trying to do here?" There are a couple of premises that were in my head as we worked this out.

One of the big problems with the presentation of African-American characters is that there are so few that, any time you use one, he becomes a symbol. He can take no action without it meaning something in the story. Cage is not a guy who's a private detective—he's "black people."

COWAN: He's *all* black people in comics.

McDUFFIE: And that's a crushing weight to work under as a creator. If I want to do a white character, he can be saint or sinner or anything in between, and it doesn't mean that all white people.

WIZARD: that you're characterizing all white people by his actions.

McDUFFIE: Right

Premise number one: Destroy the monolith. Present a range of characterizations, people who come from different backgrounds, who represent different points of view, who have a range of temperaments, so that whatever any individual character does speaks for that character and not for "blackness" in that case.

One of the reasons people read comics is because they want to find the heroes in themselves.

That's a premise we will repeat as we bring in more and more groups, so that ideas like, "That's the Hispanic guy—he's hot-tempered," will be out of the question.

Another premise: The environment, the city of Dakota, must be as grounded in reality as we could possibly make it. We have a 400-page bible, of which nearly 100 pages is a description of the city, the neighborhoods, the ethnic makeup, the tensions, the feuds; where are the good schools, where are the bad schools, what's the economy. We want to leave it in the now. Superhero action fantasy aside, I don't want it to be a world where you can pop over to Reed Richards' lab and borrow a time machine. I want it to be that when you see a man fly, it's the most amazing thing you've ever seen. If somebody travels in time, I don't want my

ICON

A spaceship crashes into a field and the lone survivor is adopted by the humans who find him. But the time is 1839 and the survivor and his foster parents are black slaves. Named Augustus, he grows to adulthood and discovers he has a range of superhuman abilities, which he uses to secretly help his people, biding his time until human technology can repair his ship. But he is also much longer-lived than his human family...and in time, by 1893, he has successfully lived and survived as his own great grandson, living off a fortune built up over more than 100 years. He's a conservative Republican, by the way.

But when a young black woman of the streets challenges him to use his powers publicly, as a symbol to the black populace of Dakota and America, he becomes Icon. He's a hero who has a lot to learn about his own people—and also a lot to teach them.

heroes to be blasé about traveling in time or "Oh, it's Galactus, again!." [laughter]

Every single time I see Galactus I'm going to be impressed, cause he eats planets.

DINGLE: "Oh, geez, he's coming to eat us again."

WIZARD: "Somebody rang the dinner bell, did they?"

McDUFFIE: On occasion, it means we will ignore some rules of development. If one guy has a laser gun, that doesn't mean that in two years they will be real cheap and everybody has a laser gun. It's going to be one of the very few laser guns and it's amazing that he has one.

WIZARD: When you have technology like that, you either

have to say this is so expensive or so power-consumptive or something that it cannot become mass-market...or you have to imply it anyway. This is not going to become the Saturday Night Special five years down the road.

McDUFFIE: I tried to play that game with Deathlok. We said Deathlok is the cutting edge of technology: He cost $14 billion. They're not going to do it every week, and everybody isn't going to have one.

COWAN: But now...

McDUFFIE: Of course, everybody has one now. But that was not *my intention*.

STATIC

On the same night of "the big bang," geeky Virgil Hawkins is challenged to observe the gang warfare of Paris Island. And the radioactive gas affects him as well, granting him a bizarre array of electrical powers. Developing a costume and refining control of his abilities, he becomes Static—a confident, brash, witty celebrity counterpart to his continuing geeky self.

COWAN: And that's not our company.

McDUFFIE: There's a sense of magic you retain by keeping the world "real."

First of all, you can grapple with real issues and communicate. Most importantly, though, the first time somebody's feet leave the ground and they're flying—nobody's ever seen it before; nobody can believe it. We want to bring back that sense of primal power that you got when you read your first comic book.

WIZARD: How do you keep that magic for the jaded, jaundiced reader, who has been reading comics—even if for just three or four years—and who has seen that range of stuff where this level of technology and superpowers is commonplace?

COWAN: Let's bring it back to Derek's point: I think the way to get the jaded readers to accept this wildly new premise in comics is through superior writing and, with all modesty, these books are very well written—with a sheer inventiveness that these talents have brought to the projects. We'll get people to believe that a man who can fly is really special.

COWAN: That's one of the ways it'll happen.

McDUFFIE: Storytelling.

COWAN: Storytelling—the new trend in comics.

DINGLE: Content—good stories are the new gimmick. I think in terms of making this special, we have to make it accessible—and the more real the environment, the more accessible it becomes to the audience.

WIZARD: Jim Shooter used to say—and I think it's a true statement—that every issue of any comic is somebody's first issue. How do you maintain that accessibility six months, a year down the road...and have that evolution in the character—and not bore the readers who have been with you from the beginning?

McDUFFIE: Accessibility is crucial. One of the precepts we started with in our work is that if you read all four books it's richer, but you can read one and never notice anything missing. That goes right down to the story level. Comics seems to be the only continuing serial medium where people think this is a problem.

Look at something as superficial as *Cheers*: It has ongoing storylines, the characters develop, they've changed over the years, the situation's changed over the years. I watch maybe four or five times a season and I can follow it. If I watched every episode there are other levels to the stuff that I'm not always catching. Every once in a while, I'll get a piece of them—a reference to something I didn't see. But I can certainly watch an episode of *Cheers* or *L.A. Law* and still follow it, even without seeing every show.

The way that you do that is that every episode—every issue—has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Something's set up, something's played out, there's a climax, there's a resolution. It might be issue three of a four-issue story, but something happened and the reader got an entire piece. The unit in comic books is the issue. It's very, very rare that there's a story so big that you absolutely have to do four issues and you use up every page for set-up: "Oops, I'm on page 22; next month, we'll pick up on page 23." We have to work in the unit we have.

Subplots continue, characters develop—in *Static*, if you put together the first four issues, it's an origin. But issue 1, issue 2, issue 3 are each complete stories. If people could do complete stories in 11 pages 25 years ago, I think we can come up with something in 22. [laughter]

DINGLE: In the comics of old, you knew the characters, you had a sense of their motivation, you had a feeling of what they were about, after you read that 11-page story. Then you kept going back—"I wonder what other situations he dealt with."

McDUFFIE: They weren't as slick, they weren't as rich—but characters had motivations, they had problems solved, there was something clever, there was a new villain, all in 11

pages. "Hey, we got room for another one!" [laughter]

WIZARD: In terms of motivation—clear motivation—in the past five years or so in comics, it seems that the concept of a hero with a clear motivation on the level of "I have an ability that no one else has and I should do something with it"

Even within the cliché of the dark, gritty hero, there's a core of a Bogart-like character.

COWAN: "With great power, comes great responsibility"?

WIZARD: Yeah, the Spider-Man motto—that idea has become unfashionable. How do the Milestone characters—the heroes of Dakota City—fit in?

McDUFFIE: We have four books. One is a team book—everybody in that book has extremely different motivations for what they're doing. They range from heroic to "is there any money in this?"

COWAN: Even to "there *better* be some money in this." [laughter]

McDUFFIE: As the books start, Hardware's motivations are very selfish. He gets better, he will grow. Icon's motivations are selfless, but extremely condescending—but he'll get better. He will grow. Static is a kid who is just figuring it out—and he'd *better* grow. He's just sort of on the level of, "I can do this!"

I think it is unfashionable to have heroes in the classic sense. I think fashions pass. Deep within everybody, we want to believe in people like that.

COWAN: Why do people keep coming back to comics? To Superman, or the X-Men? Or anyone? What are they looking for?

McDUFFIE: Even within the cliché of the dark, gritty hero, there's a core of a Bogart-like character. "I will present myself as cynical, hard-bitten. I don't believe in anything—but you better go with him; the war is important."

COWAN: There's still an essential goodness in me/the hero.

McDUFFIE: We're just too cool to give it up.

DINGLE: What has not been shown nearly enough is "Hey, that didn't work out the way it was supposed to." That's a draw, not a clear victory. I think the shades of gray you don't see with nobility will come out with Icon. As Dwayne said, some of the characters in Blood Syndicate operate in a mode of survival, and sometimes nobility comes out of survival. Sometimes your baser side comes out of survival. I think you're going to see the different gradations of one's character and one's motivation.

McDUFFIE: That's one of the interesting things about crises. In times of crisis, the worst people can do the most wonderful things. And the people you thought were rock-solid fall apart on you. These people are going to be in crisis situations all the time.

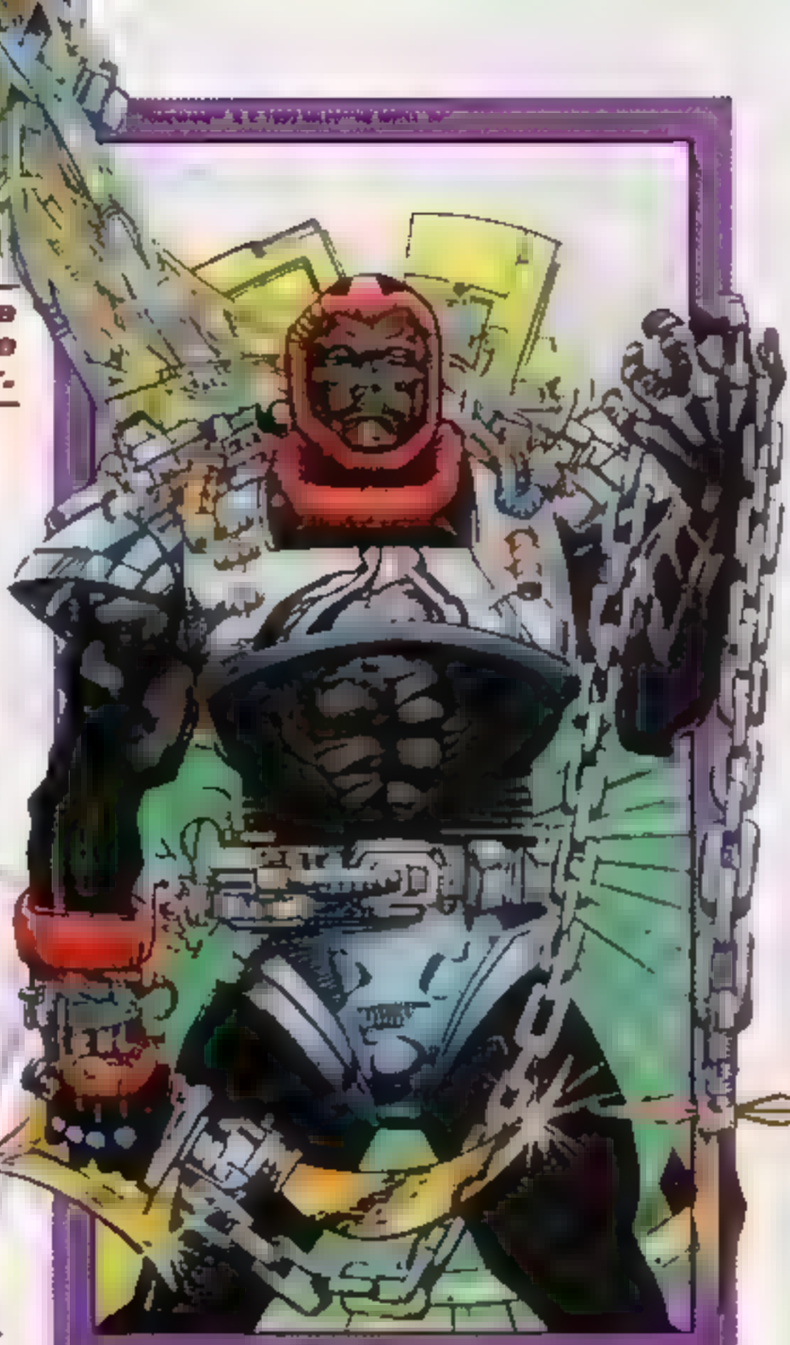
DINGLE: I think one of the reasons people read comics is because they want to find the heroes in themselves.

COWAN: People are looking for heroes and Milestone's going to give it to them.

DINGLE: The question at Milestone is, "Can you be a hero in this kind of reality, this kind of environment?"

McDUFFIE: The answer is "Yes—but it ain't gonna be easy."

★



HARDWARE

Curtis Metcalf, genius top inventor for Alva Industries, discovers his employer and benefactor, Edward Alva, is as big a crook as there is in Dakota City. Hurt and betrayed, Metcalf determines to bring him down. In short order, Alva's operations are being stymied at every turn by a mysterious, implacable, high-tech creature of the night who calls himself Hardware, who is armed with a seemingly endless array of cutting-edge ordnance.

JAE LEE
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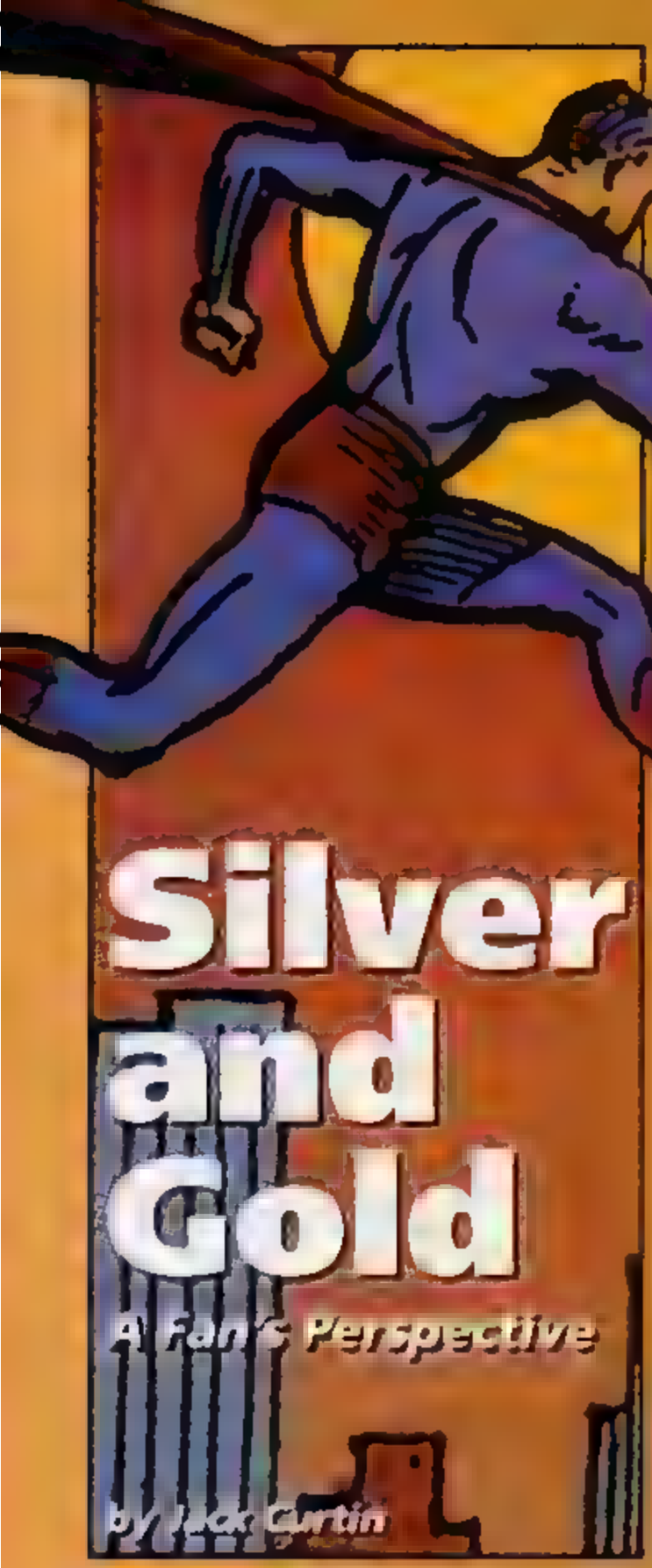


Silver and Gold

A Fan's Perspective

by Jack Curtin

What was it like? I'll tell you what it was like. I had to walk three miles to school every day, through hip-deep snow. And that was after milking the cows and bringing in the firewood. And another thing...

What's that? Oops. Sorry, wrong nostalgia. Hey don't blame me, my mind's been rotted from decades of reading comic books

Okay, let's start over. Come with us now to the simpler days of 41-odd years past. We are standing at the abyss, the beginning of the great empty darkness between the end of the Golden Age (which I measure from the [illegible] ics in early 1951) and the start of the Silver Age (the first appearance of the Manhunter from Mars in *Detective Comics* #225 in late 1955, some [illegible] y, but the era is usually dated from the return of The Flash in *Showcase* #4 late the following summer).

Those "lost years" were surprisingly few looking back. Even if, as I do, you feel that the "real" rebirth of superheroes should be dated from the first appearances of the Justice League of America in *The Brave and the Bold* #28-30 in 1960 and the birth of the Marvel Universe with *Fantastic Four* #1 a year later, we are talking less than a decade (although I'll grant you that ten years probably covered two generations of comics readers back in those da[illegible]

You must understand that those of us who grew up reading comics in the Golden Age were happily and blissfully ignorant. Comics were just there; at the newsstand, the corner drugstore, the bus station. You took your weekly allowance and hustled down to buy whatever caught your fancy, ten cents a dance. Hey, you missed an issue? No big deal, there'd be another next month

However, after a while, next month didn't always come. Titles would either disappear with no notice (*Flash Comics* faded into limbo with the February 1949 issue) or, even more of an indignity, undergo complete transformations. *All American* became a war comic in 1948, *Sensation* an ersatz romance and all-girl title shortly thereafter. *Captain America*, lord help us all, became a horror title in 1949 before dying a quick and unlamented death. When *All-Star* went western in January 1951, it was all over. Captain Marvel and various siblings were still struggling along over at Fawcett and the old standbys (Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman) would continue to appear every month, but superheroes were generally a thing of the past.

All of this happened in a vacuum. There was nowhere to turn for information, no place to complain, nobody else to even talk to about it except a friend or two. Comics were for kids and nobody seemed to care much what kids wanted or thought. There was certainly great variety in the comics left on the stands (war, western, science fiction, romance), but most of it was pretty woeful stuff. And thus it remained, aside from a brief and failed attempt by Timely to revive Captain America, Sub-Mariner and The Human Torch in *Young Men Comics* in 1953 and '54. For superhero fans, there were only DCs Big Three (in increasingly dreary stories) and two second bananas who somehow made the cut, Aquaman and Green Arrow.

In the December 1977 issue of *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, that company's excellent and long-gone corporate fanzine, Mike Gold (in an article on the birth of the Silver Age which I unabashedly used for research) made the argument for the appearance of J'onn J'onzz marking the beginning of the Silver Age. He was, Gold pointed out, "the first successful new superhero since the Black Canary...(who) got her start in *Flash Comics* #86, in August 1947." True enough, and measured against what else was out there, the Martian Manhunter was certainly notable. But six or eight pages in the back of

ive Comics do not an era make. Call the jolly green giant a harbinger, not a new beginning.

That came with *Showcase* #4, a real shocker. For the new kids on the block, young comics fans who had never seen such a thing, here was a bright new superhero, modern and visual and altogether exciting. For the old-timers, those of us who still haunted the newsstands and [illegible] pawed our way through the meager offerings on the comics spinners, it was just pla[illegible] ash m[illegible] world became a little bit brighter.

Well, things moved a bit slower in the [illegible] until the [illegible] icked up. Green Lantern got the *Showcase* [illegible] nt next, with three appearances before getting his own book in the summer of 1960. The Justice League got [illegible] sue tryout in *The Brave and the Bold* almost [illegible] nd when they debuted in their own title a couple of months later, a new age of superheroes had clearly begun.

And new it was, not least because this time the fans were soon an active part of the mix. Using the new DC letter pages as a link-up point, many fans found out that they had been part of a vast underground community all along. Among the most influential: Dr. Jerry Bails, the great historian of the Golden Age; St. Louis school teacher Roy Thomas, who harbored some dreams of maybe becoming a comics writer himself some day; G. L. [illegible] *Blast & Comic Collector* [illegible] oh yeah, that nice Thompson couple out in Cleveland.

Fans began wielding their power before even quite [illegible] ad it. DC had planned to use the Justice League just as they had the Justice Society, [illegible] Superman and Batman sitting it out on the sidelines, allowing exposure to the lesser-known heroes. Fans would have none of it. Superman and Batman they wanted and Superman and Batman they soon got. Over at Marvel, meanwhile, plans to feature the Fantastic Four in street clothes and forego all the standard superhero trappings fell by the wayside as early as the third issue because comics fans made it known they liked their heroes in long underwear.

But all was not well on the business side of comics. Within a decade, the newsstand distributing system began to fall apart, as the distributors and retailers deemed comics not profitable enough to be bothered with. Not too long thereafter, in Brooklyn, teacher and back-issue dealer Phil Seuling began talking the big publishers into selling him their books at a discount and letting him distribute them for resale to others around the country, giving birth to the direct market, the last (and absolutely necessary) ingredient in this new and changing world.

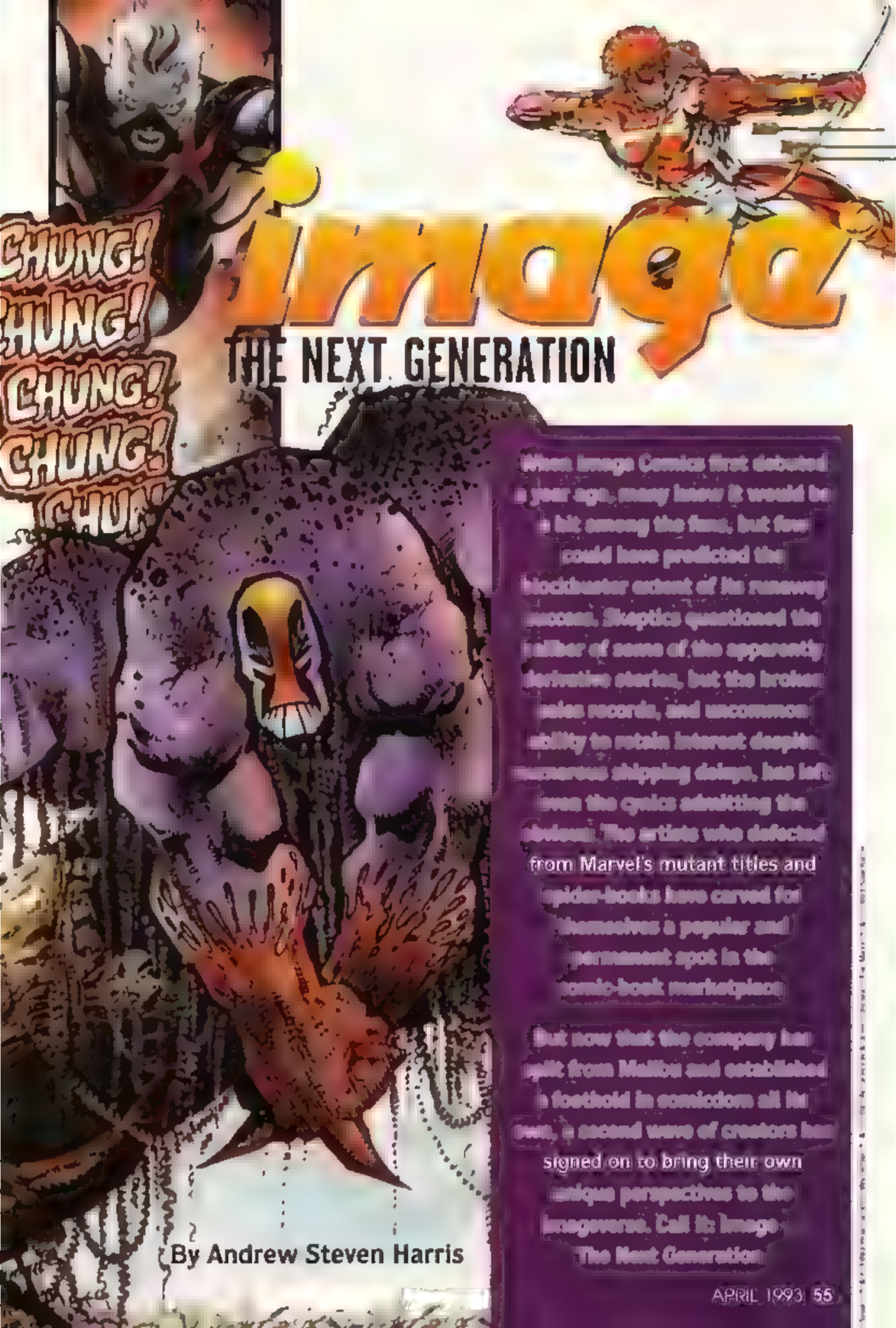
We've come a long way since then. That brief time [illegible] years ago when the comics came as close to dying as they ever have was but a way stop on the journey from exuberant and childish fantasies to intricate and [illegible] grim and gritty.

Where wide-eyed kids once happily traded tattered favorites back and forth, steely-eyed teenagers now negotiate like stock brokers.

We have gone from the Golden Age to the Silver A[illegible] to what one critic has dubbed (and I love it) the Mylar Age.

Call it what you will. Some even call it progress.

BRIGADE
'93
Robert Burgundy
Image



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THE NEXT GENERATION

When Image Comics first debuted a year ago, many knew it would be a hit among the fans, but few could have predicted the blockbuster extent of its runaway success. Skeptics questioned the caliber of some of the apparently derivative stories, but the broken sales records, and uncommon ability to retain interest despite numerous shipping delays, has left even the cynics admitting the obvious: The artists who defected from Marvel's mutant titles and spider-books have carved for themselves a popular and permanent spot in the comic-book marketplace.

But now that the company has split from Malibu and established a foothold in comicdom all its own, a second wave of creators has signed on to bring their own unique perspectives to the imageverse. Call it: Image The Next Generation.

By Andrew Steven Harris

Perhaps the most unusual of those perspectives comes from Sam Kieth, whose eclectic artwork on the high-profile "Blood Hungry" Wolverine story in *Marvel Comics Presents* along with best-selling writer Peter David, brought him to immediate fan acclaim. He went on to become the regular cover artist for *MCP*, and continued to draw attention with his quirky interpretations of established Marvel characters, such as giving Ghost Rider gigantic booted feet.

Kieth's Image series, *The Maxx*, looks to have a concept as quirky as his artwork. Like Kieth's Wolverine series, The Maxx will debut in eight-page installments in an anthology series, but it will quickly move on to its own full-fledged title shortly thereafter.

"Everybody kept saying 'you'll never get it off the ground in eight pages.' Everybody said 'you're going to have to do your own book,' " Kieth says. "So now here's my chance. Now I get to draw really big feet."

Kieth prefers to stay closed-mouth about most of the details of the story, but what he has let on about it creates the impression that it will be the most unusual Image series to date. The book, he says, will mix a "grim-and-gritty" look with the weirdness of a dream world reminiscent of the Australian aborigine "dreamtime."

"It's two worlds," Kieth says. "One story is set in the modern world, and he's involved in these unsavory things. He's this seedy bum sort of character who sleeps in garbage bins, but he sees things in terms of this dreamworld. He's this gritty regular guy who keeps having these hallucinations, slipping into another world. There's also this woman, a social worker who's trying to help him out. She's trying to convince him that the modern world is real, but he's coming to this realization that this other world is the real world and the real world is a dream."

Neat, but is this series concept too offbeat for the kids that make up the bulk of Image fans?

"I think as long as two people physically hurt each other there's enormous possibility for acceptance among kids," Kieth says, laughing. "Maxx is going to be like an antihero, but kind of strange. Wolverine is a straight antihero and Lobo is completely over the top. Maxx is kind of in between the two.

"And after issue one there's also going to be a lot more opportunity for action. We have a crossover with Erik Larsen's Savage Dragon in issue #3, and we have this great villain that the kids will like. His name is Mr. Gone, and he looks cool. He started out as having a Kelley Jones cape and ended up having a Todd McFarlane cape. He has this cape that billows out and looks more and more like origami paper and wraps people up and kills them. The cape travels along the floor and creeps up along the wall or whatever happens to be nearby.

"The cape can also increase the gravitational pull of objects that are between it and the person Mr. Gone is fighting, so that they fly across the room at the person. The person at the other end could get attacked by anything in the room. Like, if Mr. Gone were fighting The Maxx in a room filled with cream pies..."

It seems that Kieth just can't resist lapsing into such humor and weirdness, but he does reassure that *The Maxx* won't be a comedy book.

"Odd things may happen but Maxx will always remain a grim and gritty character. This is not going to be a silly book at all, at most it will be sardonic. My art deviates from the norm, so my stories will as well. But if something silly happens, it's because I'm making fun of the idea of that being cute. Make no mistake, I promise there's going to be a lot of action—just hang in there after #1."

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Maxx debuts as a four-part story in the new *Darker Image* anthology series and then moves on to his own three issue miniseries. That builds to the climax of his origin in a special issue #1/2 published in conjunction with *Wizard*, along with a trading card series from Image that releases clues about The Maxx's peculiar secrets.

Exactly what secrets those are Kieth declines to publicly say, but he does say that it will give readers a chance "to decide if you really hate it or like it" before the regular ongoing Maxx series starts in June. Once that occurs, Kieth says, readers can expect to see the series on time every month.

"My goal is to make *The Maxx* the OTHER Image book that comes out on time besides *Spawn*," he says. "I don't even want to be a week late. I hate being late and I scream bloody murder if I'm late, down to the day."

Kieth has a few other goals for the Maxx—among them, crossovers with heroes from other companies.

"I would love to see a Maxx/Wolverine. I'd really like to do a Batman/Maxx. But especially a Maxx/Lobo—here's a situation in which neither guy is playing with reality."

DC has already announced crossover plans with Image, leaving open the possibility of Kieth seeing his plans come to fruition.

But perhaps top among Kieth's goals is to get his sea legs in working as a plotter on the book, with scripter and prior collaborator William Messner-Loebs.

"I've never plotted before—that's what's going to be interesting. I've broken down stories in typical Marvel method (in which the artist lays out the full comic book from a two- or three-page plot), so I don't feel that coming up with the sequence of events is that different. I just have to try to convey to Bill the characterizations and as many motivations as possible. My part will be what goes on, and his part will be to have them say the things gracefully and not awkwardly, which would be what would happen if I tried to script it. We worked first together on *Epicurus the Sage* and if we could have half the characterizations as in *Epicurus* it's going to be good."

But if Sam Kieth has taken his project down the solo character route, artist Larry Stroman has gone the opposite direction and created what might be called the ultimate team book—more than 200 characters are expected to appear in his upcoming *Tribe*. Like Kieth and many of his Image cohorts, Stroman also came to fan attention working on one of Marvel's mutant books, in this case the *X-Factor* revival that recently debuted the popular new team lineup.

Stroman, by coincidence, also began his mutant work in collaboration with writer Peter David, but on *Tribe*, Stroman will be handling the story plotting chores himself.

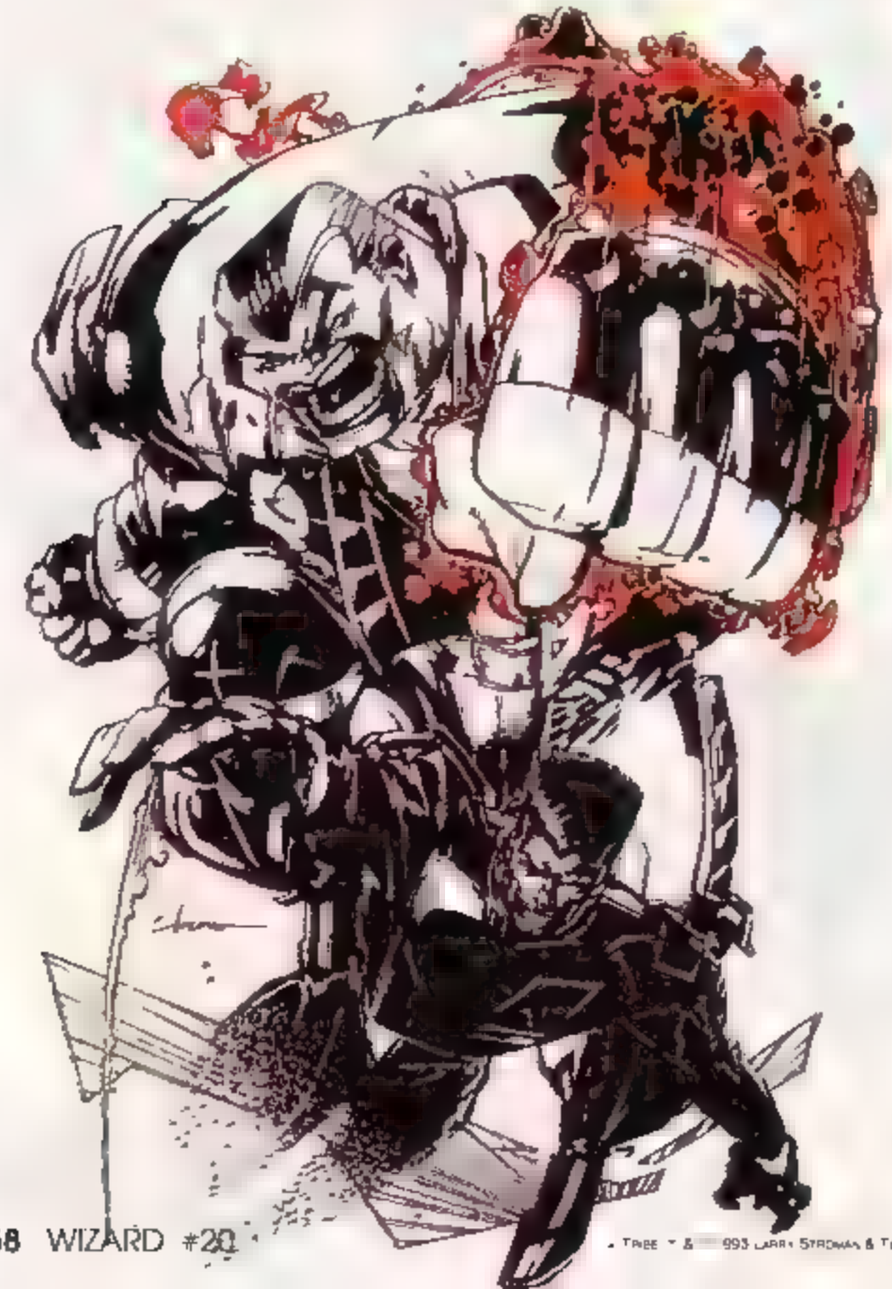
"We sat around for weeks and weeks and talked about all of the different kinds of things we wanted to do," Stroman says, describing his collaboration with scripter and co-plotter Todd Johnson. "Most we scrapped and some we kept, and we put what we thought were the best ideas together. That's what became *Tribe*, and that's why the series has so much stuff—it's a complication, a lot of which came out completely by accident as we talked it out."

Stroman describes *Tribe* as a fast paced action series set in New York City, a story of power and control starting out with seven core members and eventually expanding to more than 200 as the series grows over the years.

"It's not your traditional team," Stroman says. "Various members are recruited by team leader Blindspot, and the alliance is only one of convenience. Each team member has his own agenda, and once resolved the roster will change."

Blindspot serves as the leader for a mixed group of seven characters that become entangled in story of international technological espionage brought on by a transcontinental conspiracy known as "Europan."

"The main villain is Lord Deus Devirelle, known as Providence, an ageless energy creature who a millennium ago was worshipped as one of the Earth's many pagan high fathers," Stroman explains. "After the end of the pantheon era, Deus later emerged in Europe when industry was still in its infancy. He built a powerful



TRIBE ™ & © 1993 LARRY STROMAN & TODD JOHNSON

THEY DID
BRIGADE
image

conglomerate and at present they have merged with a cutting-edge Japanese company, forming the dominating juggernaut Europan. Europan is now a powerful international corporation that seeks worldwide influence by cornering the market on breakthrough technologies and research.

"Europan also employs a variety of super-mercenaries to do their dirty work," Stroman says, "and Europan's origins will be revealed in a plot that will rock the Image universe."

Battling Europan will be the seven members of Stroman's initial Tribe team, all under the command of Blindspot. Blindspot, AKA Murdock Ellison, is a scientific genius who stumbles across the ultimate goal of Europan while experimenting with his own stealth technology, thus setting the events of the series in motion.

The initial roster of characters is an interesting mix: Elias Banneckaer, a brilliant but down-and-out engineer, who created state-of-the-art battle armor, only to find the designs stolen after improper patents were filed. Shift, formerly the middleweight boxer Franklin Sadler, acquired super-speed in a failed steroid research experiment. Alexander Collins, alias The Front, owns the Hype dance club and commands mastery over illusions. Metallurgist Matthew Desmond is Steel Pulse, who can transform his body into living metal.

Fashion model Nicholena Johnson, when not stirring up the streets of New York City as Fly Girl, plays an interesting role in the Image universe—along with partner Angela Slate, Nicholena owns Rumb ewear, the fashion cooperative responsible for making the superhero outfits worn by characters in most of the other Image comics. Then there's Sebastian Todd, who goes by the name Short Order, and who not only owns the gourmet restaurant Pups, a popular hot spot, but also has the power to split into 50 smaller versions of himself (and thus bring the potential Tribe membership count to 250). And finally, Stroman says, there is a subsequent character only known as "Rosalyn," whose powers remain a mystery but who will eventually prove to be the most powerful member of the team.

Stroman's hoping that the mix and depth of the characters will let him provide new takes on several tried-and-true themes.

"I wanted to take guys who had all the powers of traditional superheroes and make them into completely different characters," Stroman says. "I wanted them to be familiar but also totally new."

To that end, Stroman will be penciling and inking the book, and even coloring a few pages, in addition to co-plotter duties. Johnson will co-plot and provide the script. *Tribe* starts off as a miniseries and then moves directly into a regular ongoing series.

But if Kieth has gone the solo route and Stroman has developed a team book, new Image creators Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway have managed the tricky task of doing both at once. *Wildstar* focuses on a fugitive from the future and the strike force team sent to hunt him down, but the story is set in an intergalactic war that leaves open the question about who are the good guys and who are the bad.

"Wildstar is a very powerful character, like this super soldier from the future," says Ordway. "The concept is that he's this character caught in a time loop, and he keeps replaying this moment in time over and over again and needs to break this loop. He also travels back in time 30 years, to our time, to stop a war that's about to begin. Other guys from the other side follow him back to try to prevent him from stopping the war. Wildstar is definitely the hero of the piece, but remember, this is a war—who the good guys are and who the bad guys are depends on what town

Wildstar ™ & © 993 Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway

you're living in."

Further clouding the issue of who is good and who is bad are the strange alien symbiotes that have attached to each of the characters. It's the symbiotes that give the characters their enhanced powers, but there's a drawback to them as well. The alien creatures have a sentience of their own, and the independence of each person depends on his ability to resist the symbiote's influence.

"The symbiotes seem pretty rough, pretty violent, and that's what drives a lot of these characters," Ordway says. "Wildstar's, on the other hand, isn't evil, and that's what pits him against the other guys. Everybody's got a different amount of willpower/drive, and we thought that would be a good hook to determine what type of person each character is. The symbiotes are not all in the same place—one guy has one living in an eye socket where he lost an eye; Wildstar's is attached over his heart.

"There's also a lot of mysteries along the way, such as a relationship in the past between Wildstar and one of the guys in the group that's after him, and that also plays off the idea of who is the bad guy and who is the good guy."

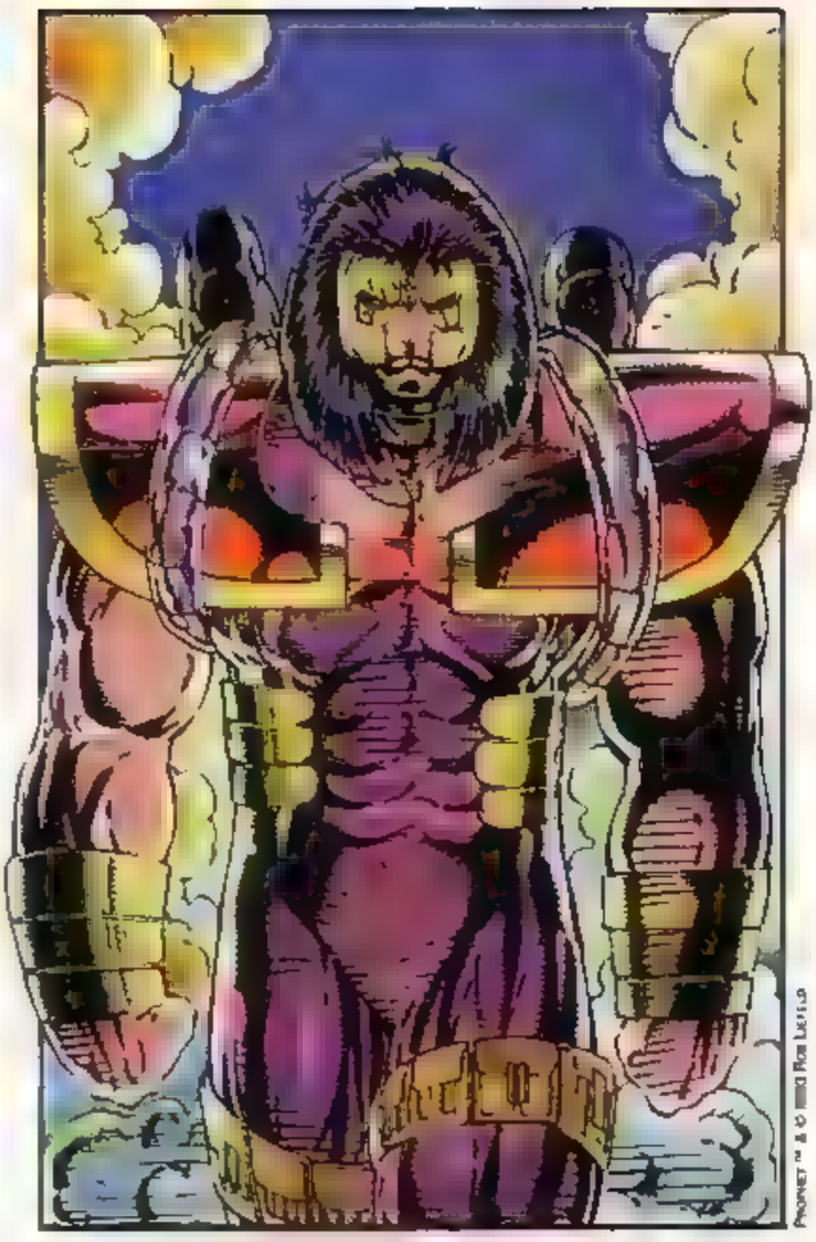
It's that team of hunter characters that might eventually spin off into their own book, Ordway says, since in issue #3 a truly astounding event happens: Wildstar dies, killed off three-quarters of the way into his debut miniseries.

Not a good sign, Ordway admits, for a man who just wrote a chapter in the death of the seminal superhero, Superman. But, he says, unlike the Man of Steel, Wildstar stays dead and doesn't come back, despite having another whole issue left in the miniseries.

"But wait till you see what happens in that issue!" he says.

Before all that happens, however, Ordway will chart Wildstar's violent final days, providing the pencils, along with the story co-plotted with inker Gordon. Gordon is the originator of the series, and will continue to have Ordway work with him on the title as they plan out an ongoing book after the end of the four issue miniseries.

"We both have totally opposite ideas, and some of the best stuff is produced by polarized creators when both sides are challenging the other side to do better stuff," Ordway says,



"It's rewarding, but it's also very tiring. You can have that between a solo creator and an editor as well, but in some way you always need to be challenged. The problem in doing an Image book is that there's no editor to work as a sounding board, so Al and I have both been taking on the tasks that an editor would perform."

Ordway, perhaps the first well-known artist to be recruited by Image who doesn't come from the Marvel clique, is also having a good time in working on a project that doesn't involve someone wearing a big red "S." Ordway has either written or drawn Superman continuously since 1986, and now that he's retiring from the character with the landmark *Adventures of Superman* #500, he's looking forward to doing a different kind of story.

"It's violent, but it's also funny, kind of like *Nightmare on Elm Street*-kind of stuff, a little bit of *Aliens*-style horror," he says. "It's great to be doing stuff that's the exact opposite of a Superman book, like drawing an alien being ripped off a guy's face...It's fun to imagine what would that look like after it's been living on his face all these years. It's been a lot of fun for me doing gross-out stuff!"

Wildstar will cross over into the rest of the Image Universe, Ordway says, including an already-planned appearance by Savage Dragon and possible stories involving PITT and Supreme, both of whom are also involved in intergalactic wars, and thus naturally lending themselves to inter-relation.

But such plans are only small potatoes compared to the crossovers Image has planned for the rest of the year, according to Image founder Rob Liefeld.

Liefeld's *Youngblood* and Mark Silvestri's *Cyberforce* will both play a role in *Deathmate*, the upcoming Image/Valiant crossover series slated for later this year; Youngblood's Prophet and Cyberforce's Ripcaw both play key roles in the epic storyline. In addition, Liefeld says, a story running through both *Brigade* and

the new title *Bloodstrike* will unleash the story of Project: Born Again on the Imageverse, a controversial storyline whose shock waves might end up in the pages of *Spawn* and other titles.

After that, Liefeld says, Prophet spins off into his own title, while the *Youngblood* miniseries grows into two separate ongoing series, one for the home team and one for the away team.

"There's a new president in the White House, a new administration and a new agenda," Liefeld says. "It's a Democratic administration after 12 years of Republicans, and they come in and retool Youngblood. We'll unveil the new Youngblood teams in the fall, with new additions made and some characters handed their walking papers."

Youngblood will also spin off into *Youngblood: Strike File* (more next issue), a four-issue miniseries drawn by new fan-favorite Jae Lee, which focuses on individual characters from the Youngblood team.

"*Youngblood* is like an Avengers book, with the characters coming together," Liefeld says, "but in the (original) Avengers you had a bunch of characters that already had their own solo books previously. Because Youngblood is these characters together as a team, we couldn't go into all of them in depth. We don't want to go too fast, we don't want to spin off every character, but we want to focus on some of them individually."

Liefeld will also be releasing *Brigade* as an ongoing series, and that book will link up with *Bloodstrike*, a title about a kind of Internal Affairs department for superheroes, in the Blood Brothers storyline running through the first two issues of each book.

"In every police department there's an Internal Affairs division, but there's nobody in the Image universe that does that for superheroes," Liefeld says. "The Internal Affairs people are very low-profile, and that's what this will be like—when a new hero arrives on the scene, such as Shadowhawk, Bloodstrike would be called in to take care of him or take him out."

Youngblood will also tie into those two new books, with the story from *Youngblood* #0 leading into *Brigade* #0 and then *Bloodstrike* #0.

All this, Liefeld says, serves to complete the setup of a master-plan storyline that was started back in *Youngblood* #1, and which many people won't realize has been surreptitiously developing all the while until they suddenly see it finally break loose in *Youngblood: Strike File*.

"Everybody's been taking potshots at the *Youngblood* miniseries, and they don't know what the crap is up," Liefeld says. "This stuff has been being set up from the beginning. We've been dropping clues all along the way, and all people have been seeing are the whams, bamms and kabooms, but when we've slowed the story down we've done it for a reason. We're trying to show people there's so much more in these books, and once the things get going, people should go back and see all the things that were going on that they missed. A lot of the Image Universe has been woven together, but people just don't realize it yet."

Liefeld's other book, *Supreme*, also has dramatic plans in store for the title character, similar to the titanic clash between Superman and Doomsday late last year.

"A guy named Khrome comes looking for him, and if you thought Doomsday was a bad guy, you should see this one. The difference is that our superhero is not a wimp, he's not going to die at the end of the story. Supreme's not a sissy."

All this seems a bit more ambitious than the Image schedule could be able to handle, but Liefeld swears that the shipping delays that have plagued the company are a thing of the past.

"Beginning in March these books will not ship late," he says. "I'll be cutting back on the artwork I do from 32 to 20 pages, and then each issue will have 12 pages of backup story, so that will let me catch up on things. But we're looking to get a solid six-week deadline on all the books, and when we say that we're not kidding."

That should please the fans, and help insure that the new wave of titles turn from Image into reality. ★

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panoramic image of
spectacular
seen on the market before
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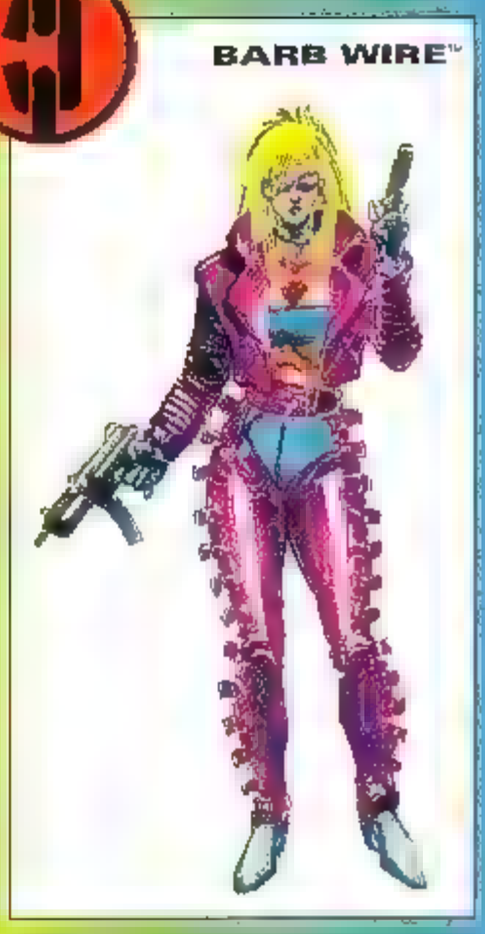

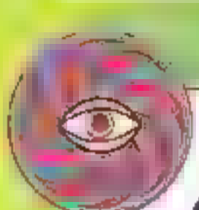

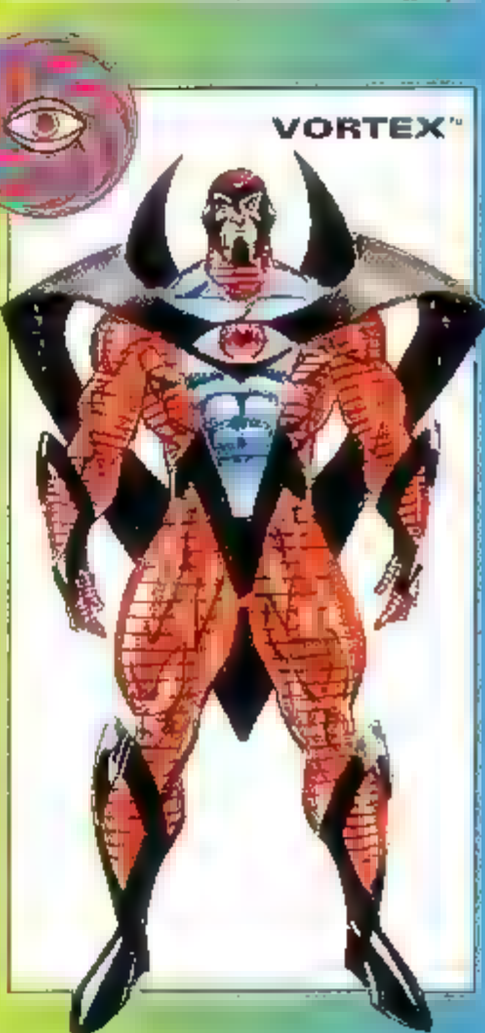

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS!™

FOILED AGAIN

BY ROBERT J. SODARO

GIMMICKS AND OTHER COMIC ENHANCEMENTS

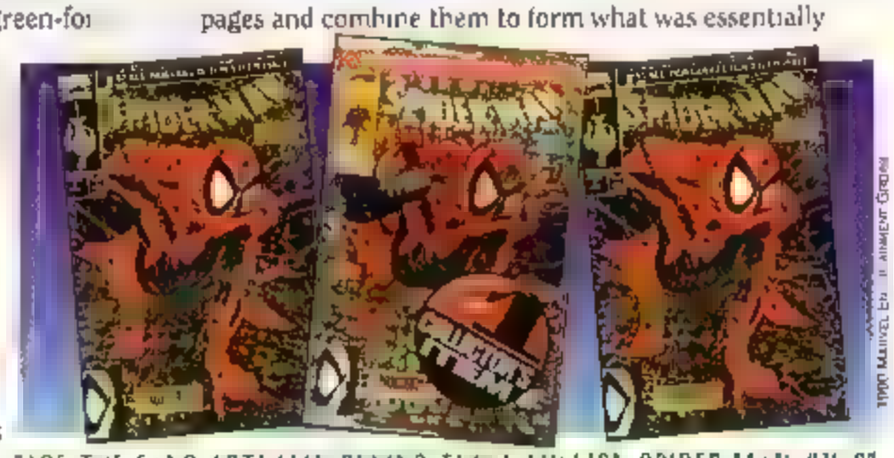
IN 1990 the adjectiveless *Spider-Man* made comic-book history by selling some three million units. The book also set new standards in marketing techniques by being re-issued in multiple colors and highlighting (i.e., a black issue, one with gold ink, one with silver ink, poly-bagged, plus a special platinum issue released to retailers only, etc.). Marvel followed this up with 1991's multiple-cover first issue of the adjectiveless *X Men*, setting new sales records by moving eight million units, making it the best-selling comic in history.

Needless to say, Marvel saw the light, and pretty soon "special" or "gimmick" issues seemed to become the norm with Marvel churning out glow-in-the-dark covers (*Ghost Rider*), die-cut covers (*Wolverine* #50), silver-foil covers (*Silver Surfer* #50, *Silver Sable* #1), gold-ink covers (*New Warriors*, *X-Men*), and even a green-foil cover for a special issue of *The Incredible Hulk* recounting his origin.

Not to be outdone, DC Comics has jumped on the bandwagon with hologram-embedded covers (*Robin II*)—which Marvel recently aped on the four Spider-titles on the 30th anniversary of his first appearance—and now "moving" covers on *Robin III*. Valiant has also been enlightened, and—in some respects—leads the pack in this area of marketing, by binding in trading cards (*Magnus*), coupons (*Harbinger*), "creating" 0-numbered issues (*Magnus*, *Harbinger*, and *Archer and Armstrong*), adding a chromium cover (*Bloodshot*) and making these "bonuses" a normal part of their output. Other published comics with bound-in trading cards include *Youngblood* #1 and *Ralph Snart*, with other publications offering additional pluses: Lobo has offered a triple-cover issue, *Lobo's Back* (with all three covers on every comic, so fans don't have to buy multiple issues), there is also a special Lobo badge. Then there's *Green Lantern*, which offered an honest-to-Oa Green Lantern ring.

And the beat goes on. DC's *Team Titans* title offered not only multiple covers, but variant interior pages as well, delivering yet another version of what an enhanced comic can be. The first issue of the series offered not only five variant covers, but different interior art as well. Each of the five issues had a different cover and 18 different interior pages (spotlighting a different member of the team), along with an additional 21 pages common to all five. DC marketing rep Patty Jeres was quick to point out that *Team Titans* was in fact a 48-page comic retailing for $1.75—the price of a standard 32-page book. This particular enhancement, she feels, is more of a bonus than "just another gimmick" engineered specifically to boost sales.

This technique of adding pages to a comic is a more radical version of one Valiant delivered with its inclusion of an eight-page insert, by Barry Windsor Smith, into *Solar* #1-10, with the center spread of each issue combining to form a huge 26 1/2" x 51 1/2" final panel—proclaimed to be the largest single comic panel in history. In Valiant's comic, all issues were the same, and readers could, if they so desired, pull out all the interior pages and combine them to form what was essentially



"ARE THE FANS ACTUALLY BUYING THREE MILLION SPIDER MAN #1'S?"

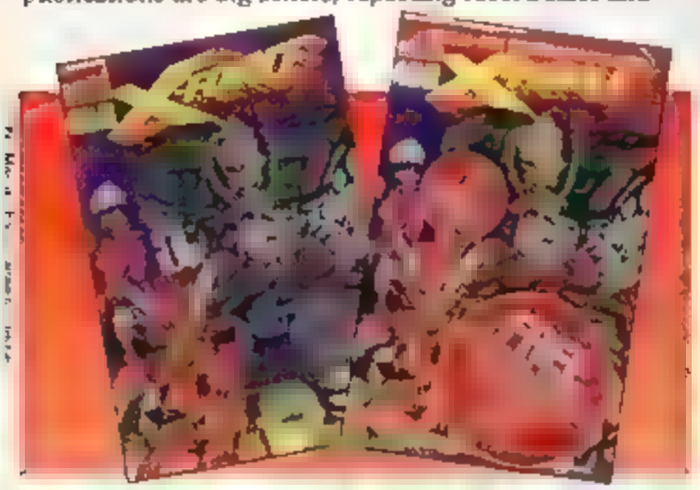
Solar #0. (Although, as has been pointed out, to see the final oversized panel, all readers really had to do was lay the eight comics out and match up the interior two-page spreads. In this fashion they not only got to see the last panel, but didn't have to destroy their comics to do so.)

However, comic books aren't the only publications that are going for the gold with special features. Both

advanced ordering catalogs from the country's two major distributors (*Advance Comics*—Capital City, and *Previews*—Diamond Comics) have bound or poly-bagged trading cards into their books. Even *Wizard* hasn't been entirely untouched by this trend, with issue #6 offering twin covers, one with a grey Hulk and a second with a green Hulk, and nearly every issue since #10 including trading cards. Needless to say, binding cards into magazines is nothing new—many of the sports and non-sports trading card magazines have been doing this type of promotion for years.

With all of these publishers jumping on the bandwagon, the cynics among us can only wonder if this is a real marketing technique designed to attract attention to a worthwhile product, or just another ploy to boost sales and disguise shoddy content. On the negative side, if these "additions" to the regular comics are simply to induce higher sales, then they should be shunned for the gimmicks they are. However, to simply dismiss all of them as mere gimmicks is unfair to the various publications and to the folks who worked on them. DC's Patty Jeres lumps this new breed of comic book in a single genre, and collectively refers to them as "enhanced" comics, which not only has a more positive ring to it, but avoids tarring them all with the same brush.

Still, the debate over their relative value rages on, with sound points on both sides of the issue. We are told in the fan press, and in house organs, that such publications are big sellers, reporting record sales and



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complete sell-outs at the distributor level. Still, the real question is, are the fans actually buying three million *Spider-Man* #1's or are the retailers in reality stuck with a huge back stock on the issue?

Perhaps the surest barometer of these special issues is whether or not they sell-through at the retail level. Thus we set out to contact a number of retailers to discover if fans are actually buying these comics. In a purely random, and totally unscientific, survey of several retailers (both on a national and local level), there is a certain amount of consensus on this issue. Most retailers we contacted felt that to outright condemn all the enhanced comics would be totally unfair, as some proved to be more saleable than others (*Spider-Man* #1 proved to be a big mover, while *X-Men* #1 languishes in back rooms—with the final "E" cover being the biggest mover of the lot).

All seem to agree that the idea of packing trading cards in comics is a great idea, while the concept of multiple covers seems to be on the wane. Holograms are white-hot; but many retailers found that some of the

MORE OF A BONUS THAN "JUST ANOTHER GIMMICK"

hologram covers of *Spectacular Spider-Man* #189 had scratches in them. "If ten of your issues were ruined," stated Dom Corbo, manager of Dream Factory, Norwalk, CT, "and you ordered 1,000 comics, that would be 1 percent of your order, but if you ordered 20, that's 50 percent of your order, and that's a big deal."

To rectify this situation, Marvel responded by poly-bagging the remaining three hologram Spider-covers. Naturally, this move once again opened Marvel up to criticism by people claiming Marvel was doing this to boost sales. ("It will be interesting to see if people buy two issues; one to keep mint in the bag, and one to read," one retailer remarked—some days you just can't win for losing.) It should be noted here that experts agree that keeping your comics in the factory-issued poly-bags will eventually ruin them, as they aren't as good for the comics as the Mylar bags you buy yourself.

One retailer who had a great deal to say about enhanced comics was Bill Leibowitz, owner of Los Angeles Golden Apple Comics. (Leibowitz bristled over the term "gimmick" when referring to these comics, as he felt that it was totally unfair to denigrate a tried-and-true marketing technique so unequivocally, especially considering the diversity of the total market.) "There are some people who feel that *Terry and the Pirates* is the last word in comics," Leibowitz told us, and then went on to say that there are also others who will beat down your door for *Youngblood*. He proved this recently when he held a major one-day signing of

the new Liefeld comic at his shop. "We had three TV news crews, two radio stations, newspapers, and sold 3,000 comics during a seven-hour period," he stated.

To be fair to all of his patrons, Leibowitz would only sell one comic book to a customer. "I had people calling up and asking to reserve copies, but I wouldn't do it." He did, however, hold copies for all of his regular customers who requested one. Some may question whether Leibowitz capitalized on a media event or created one. He admits that a fair percentage of the hoopla surrounding *Youngblood* was generated by his staging the signing, but he doesn't feel that he did anything wrong. Without discussing the relative merits of the book itself, Leibowitz felt that any retailer could have done what he did, and he feels that he brought hundreds of potential new customers to his store.

"It was a very 'Guns 'n' Roses' crowd," he said. "And we distributed free comics to the people waiting in line." In the weeks that followed, he noticed heavy traffic in his store, much of which was the direct result of the signing. While, over the long haul, many of these people may never return, he feels that there is a good chance that many will, which will expand the market, and ultimately be good for business.

On the down side, he pointed out that "Hot Picks" feeds the wrong mentality. He hopes that his customers will actually read and not simply hoard comics for their hoped-for potential value. "We need a more expanded version of 'hot'." This view was reflected by other retailers, some of whom felt that enhanced books were simply a fad, and eventually the market will level off. A spokesperson for Forbidden Planet in New York City felt that most of the enhanced books they carried had sold well, but pointed out that the DC books didn't do as well as the Marvel books, feeling that DC doesn't market its books as well.

Another major retailer and mail order distributor, Big Bob's, attempted a novel marketing trick with the pre-bagged *X-Force* comics and cards. They sold a store-bagged six-pack, five unopened comics—one each of the five different cards with the cards still bagged with the comics—as well as an unbagged comic without any card. In this fashion a fan could read their comic and save it too. It was reported that Bob's was opening comics containing the Cable cards to drive up the value of that particular card. An inside source also stated that the store ordered cases of the *Advance Comics* containing the bound-in *Star Trek—The Next Generation* uncut cards, and were planning on cutting the four-card set out of the magazine, and selling them for $10.95 each. Unfortunately Big Bob's recently went into receivership and permanently shut its doors, so we'll never know if this plan was successful.

All of which leads us to the eventual market value of enhanced comics in the years to come. Critics have correctly pointed out that the comic-book readership is measured in the hundreds of thousands, not the millions, so when a book sells six or seven million, there are literally thousands of people who have purchased multiple copies, thus depreciating the eventual back-market value of the book. At a recent New York convention, one retailer was selling copies of *Spider-Man* #1 for 50 cents simply to unload them ("I don't have the storage space, and I've got to make room for new product.").

Yet, when all is said and done, the final word is not in on enhancements, except to say that this technique is neither new (*Esquire* and *Eye* magazines both included a miniature version of *Amazing Spider-Man* #42 in their February 1969 issues), or peculiar to comic books (as pointed out, trading card mags often include cards), and if you look at the broad picture, enhancements are a tried-and-true Madison Avenue marketing technique (toys in cereal boxes, "free" ounces in detergents, manufacturer coupons packed inside, etc.). Whether or not the trend will continue depends on the type of enhancements, as well as the viability of the product itself. So long as publishers keep in mind that they are first and foremost comic-book publishers, and that the comic book—not the enhancement—is the product, the trend will continue, and the comics will retain their value.

However, when the product becomes too tricked-up, the buying public will eventually tire of the ploys and gimmicks that turn out to be just that—all flash and no show—will wind up hurting publishers that are utilizing them to cover up slipshod contents. Until then, enhancements may be just the ticket to infuse new blood, new life and perhaps even new customers in what has always been a finite, and ever-shrinking market. ★

Great · Rizzo, The Incredible Hulk, Wolverine, And Jim Lee © '89 Marvel Entertainment Group. Bram Stoker's Dracula by Topps Comics Inc. © 1992 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. Power 6 © 1991 DC Comics. Wildcats © 1992 Jim Lee

Keeping It in the Family

John Romita Jr. shares not only his father's name—but his talent and his love of comics.

By Andrew S. Harris

At a major comic-book show in New York City a few years ago, two men are walking around with name tags that confuse the uninitiated, but bring chuckles and wry smiles from those who know who they are. The first man's name tag hangs under the bespectacled face of an older man; his tag reads "John Romita's Father." The second man, with thick locks of long black hair, wears a similar name tag below a dangling earring, his reads "John Romita's Son."

It's that type of humor that has distinguished what might be described as the first family dynasty of comic-book art; clever witty, and comfortable enough with themselves to be self deprecating in an industry of famous egos.

Both generations are well-known to longtime comics mainstays, but to the current crop of comics fans, it is the younger Romita with whom they most identify. Father John now works in the backfield with Marvel's redraw troops to determine the final look of the company's comic books, while the younger of the pair, known to his fans as "JRJR," has the front-line assignments.

But if there's one thing John Romita Jr. doesn't have to do, it's distinguish himself from his father. He's long since come into his own as an artist, with high-profile assignments that in the past have included a stint on the industry's top seller of the past two decades, *Uncanny X Men*, as well as such hot books as the inaugural story arc of *Punisher War Zone*, specials featuring Punisher, Wolverine, and Ghost Rider, and the best-selling two-part *Cable* limited series.

"I'm better prepared now than I was eight or ten years ago," Romita says. "I was young, in my eyes, and I've increased much more in ability since then. If you look at my work back then and my work now, you'll see how different it is, how far it's come."

Many comic fans, of course, see Marvel making a wise business decision in addition to a wise artistic one; with Romita's familial ties to the company stretching back decades, Marvel has hedged against another defection from its top titles like that which occurred during the recent formation of Image Comics.

Romita looks at his recent assignments with a sense of humor. "I assassinated Rob Liefeld," he jokes, in the manner typical of his disarming humor when addressing potentially controversial topics. Liefeld, originally scheduled to do the art for the solo book of the character he had helped carry to prominence, was removed from the project during the much-publicized schism with Marvel. The company then turned to Romita to bring the *Cable* series to fruition.

But while Romita is happy to joke about the recent tumult in the comics industry, he's also confident enough about his place in the industry to speak candidly on the trend of artists such as Liefeld who demand handling the writing chores as part of their artistic assignments.

"What's been happening has been doing the writer a disservice, and the storytelling is suffering lately because of it," Romita says. "I don't even blame the artist. I blame the collectors, who speculate on a hot artist. Collectors,

instead of looking at the fun of comics, are not even opening the cover...a comic sealed in a packet, that's the worst example of this."

Of course, it's many of those same collectors who pay Romita's paycheck, but, he says, their money isn't as important as calling out the damage they do to the industry.

"I don't have any problem telling people this," Romita says. "Artists that absolutely blow me away find that they cannot sell a comic, and artists with no talent, as far as I'm concerned, are selling millions. If I were in that spot I'd be very happy, but there are guys who are better and aren't getting attention. It's an injustice...I'm not begrudging anyone their money—you should try to make money—but

I'm embarrassed to sell better than some guys who are so talented. I blame the fans that don't read their work, and that's a shame. Jack Kirby at his best wouldn't sell a comic today, and that's a damn shame.

"It's all a mirage, all these people who think that they're giants. People forget that the comic character is 60 percent of sales—the character is what sells the book. But I suppose it's because there were three guys who were in the right place at the right time, and it just grew geometrically. The problem is that there are too many people with small talent and big egos, people who are taking themselves too seriously and are taking away the fun."

Strong words from someone who himself has jumped on the bandwagon of doing hot collector books, but Romita looks at his own attitude as a measured response.

"Yes, I've adapted to the changing times, but I've tried to keep my own self-esteem while making money in this industry," he says. "I did a number one—*Punisher War Zone*—and I know why I did it...I had a chance to sell a number one book and make a lot of money. And I have no regrets about that. But at the same time, I've been doing this for 15 years, and this was the first opportunity I've ever had to succeed like that."

And indeed, Romita has certainly paid his dues. Though his father's name certainly did little to impede his chances for success, Romita says it took years of drawing story after story to finally refine his ability—so much so that he calls his art a "repetition style," just from the sheer volume of work that he's done over the years.

"I think it was only about a half-hour into my first penciling job that I no longer had a personal style; I had a deadline style. I had always envisioned drawing like John Byrne, or Jack Kirby, or my father...but between my head and my hands there was this big gap that not even Moses could breach. As I got better and better, from doing it over and over again, I started to develop my own kind of style, but I just call it repetition style, from doing it so much.

"I wasn't always a good mechanical artist and I was always concentrating on it, taking a

cinematic approach, taking the highlights from a scene and then connecting them. Someone like Jim Shooter, or my father, has it down pat and can pace out a book in a couple of hours and doesn't have to worry about adding or subtracting panels. I always worked on my storytelling, my creative process, but it was only the actual repetition of the artwork over and over again that got my penciling down to where my storytelling was. It's a complicated process. Anyone who thinks he can come into the business and do it real quick is wrong. They're just doing pinups."

Romita often gives art lectures at the conventions he manages to attend, though those are becoming more far-between since he moved to the rolling cornfields of Iowa, where he lives near his wife's family after several years of the couple living near his own in New York City (his own permanent residence is in Florida). "I get back as often as I can," he says, "but this year, as far as cons are concerned, was just crazy. I'll do it for as long as I can keep it up and then I'll become a hermit."

> Collectors, instead of looking at the fun of comics, are not even opening the cover.

Such vows make him think he's becoming a bit like his father, of whom he has childhood memories seeing him vanish into the attic at their old Queens, NY home for days on end to pencil what would one day become some of the most classic comic books in history.

"He'd go up into the attic with a shaven face and clean fingernails, and come down three days later with half a beard and ragged hair and dirty fingernails," Romita muses. "I mean, for all I know he could have been a transient."

In fact, Romita to this day still remembers his first exposure to his

father's work, and tells the story with the rhythm of one who has recounted it several hundred times but with the animated tone of one who never tires of retelling it.

"One day I followed him into the attic,"

the younger Romita says. "It was a typical attic, not the way they look these days, but the kind with comics and newspapers and magazines everywhere, where one little spark would have set fire to the entire city.

"He was doing some romance comics, and then I remember his working on *Daredevil* #12 [Romita Sr.'s first work at Marvel]. I remember him working on the cover, and I remember thinking, 'Wow! This is exciting!' I was six years old and I started asking all these questions...who was this person, what could that person do...and he explained it all to me. He'd say, 'This is Matt Murdock and he has radar sense,' and I'd go 'Wow!' And he'd say, 'This is Ka-Zar,' and I'd go, 'Wow!' And that was just the tip of the iceberg.

"I didn't become a fan maniac because I saw it from the artist's point of view, but it was the best. It's changed so much, now that I'm one of the people making them."

In fact, Romita has had a chance to follow in his father's footsteps and spend time on the *Daredevil* book himself, doing a popular run of books that included a Punisher guest spot at a time when the character was just beginning to come into prominence. The team-up now commands a high price on the back-issue market.

As to the new Punisher series, Romita's work has again been a runaway success, bringing a popular, broken-nosed-boxer look to the skull-chested character whose sales had begun to slip. Romita's work, some of which was with inker Klaus Janson of *Dark Knight* fame, has brought a gritty, rough-and-tumble look to Frank Castle that seems to strike a chord with the character's basic essence.

"The three up-coming issues that Klaus has inked are the finest work I've ever seen him do," Romita says. "I've never been this excited about work coming out—the work I've done on these issues is kind of like being on a hot streak. Turning the Punisher into a boxer-like thug is how he should look. Suddenly it really gave me a grasp of the character and it just kind of snowballed from there."

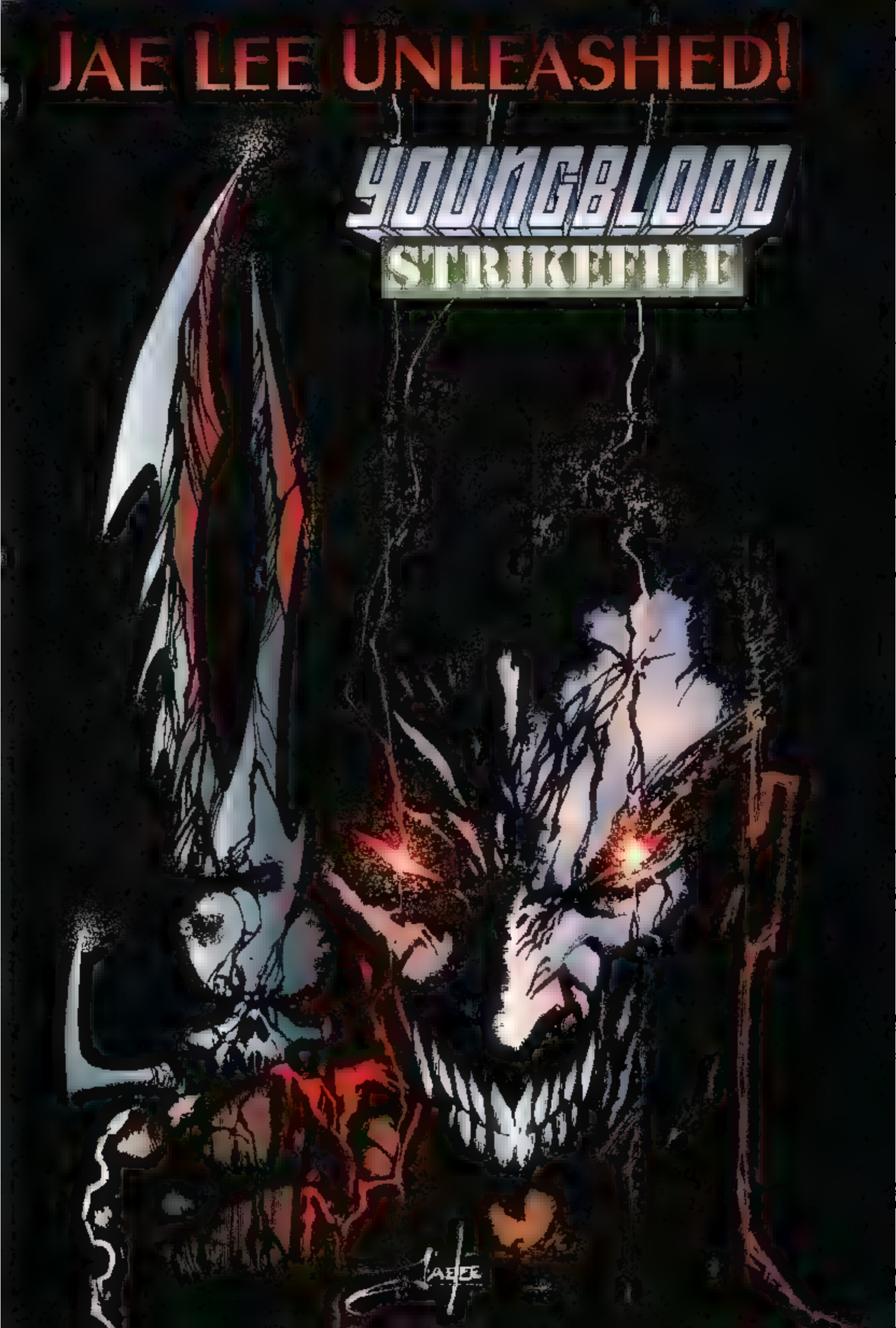
And other plans in the future? Well, Romita says, absolutely no Image books from him despite a few well-circulated rumors, but he has more than enough Marvel projects on his plate to keep him at the table for a while. "I'm finally getting to do what I want to do rather than what people are telling me to do," he says with a sense of elation. "I'm as happy as a pig in slop. See, you can tell I'm in Iowa. I would never say that if I was in New York, I would say I was happy as a pig in...well, no. I'd better not say that!"

Slated for the next three or four years, Romita plans to finish his third arc on *Punisher War Zone*, as well as a sequel to the Punisher-Wolverine-Ghost Rider "Hearts of Darkness" team up (with plans on making it a trilogy). He's working on plans for a number of bookshelf format books with different writers, including Howard Mackie and John Byrne, in a mix of Ghost Rider and other material. One is a Ghost Rider/Blade team-up, another is a tentative Ghost Rider/Spider-Man special. Romita expects to do one or two a year for the next three or four years, in addition to his regular monthly penciling slot.

"And hopefully," he says, "that will keep me in pasta for the rest of my life."

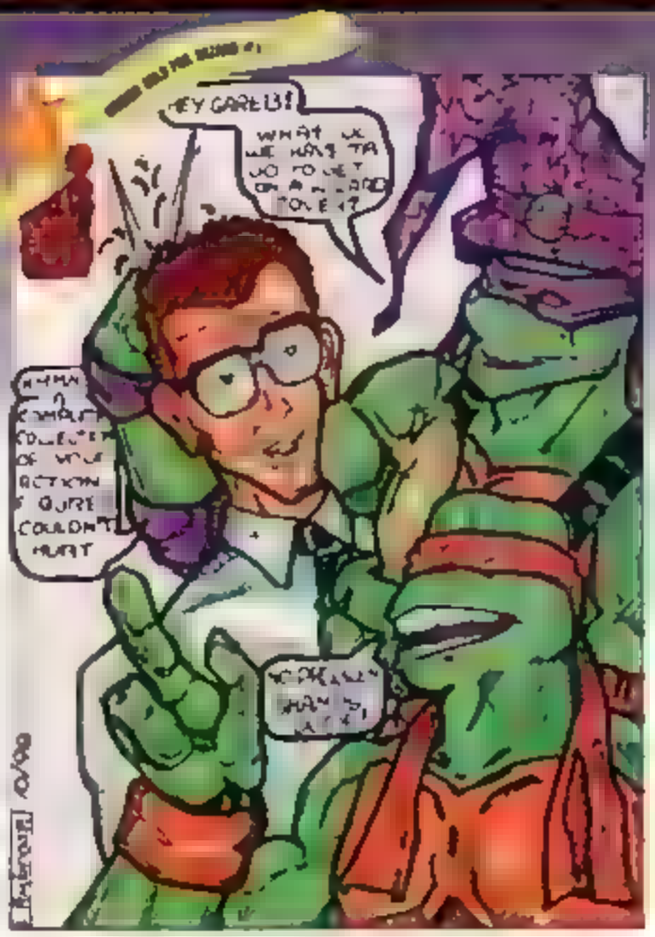
Daredevil, Cable, Silver Surfer, Iron Man, Ghost Rider, Wolverine, Ultron's Head, & The Punisher™ & © 1993 Marvel Comics

JAE LEE UNLEASHED!



Amazing ART

The Showcase Of Future Comic Book Illustrators of America!



Leonard Ambrose Jr.
Winthrop, MA Age: 22

All you need to do to enter Wizard's Amazing Art Contest is send your artwork with your name, address, telephone number and age to:

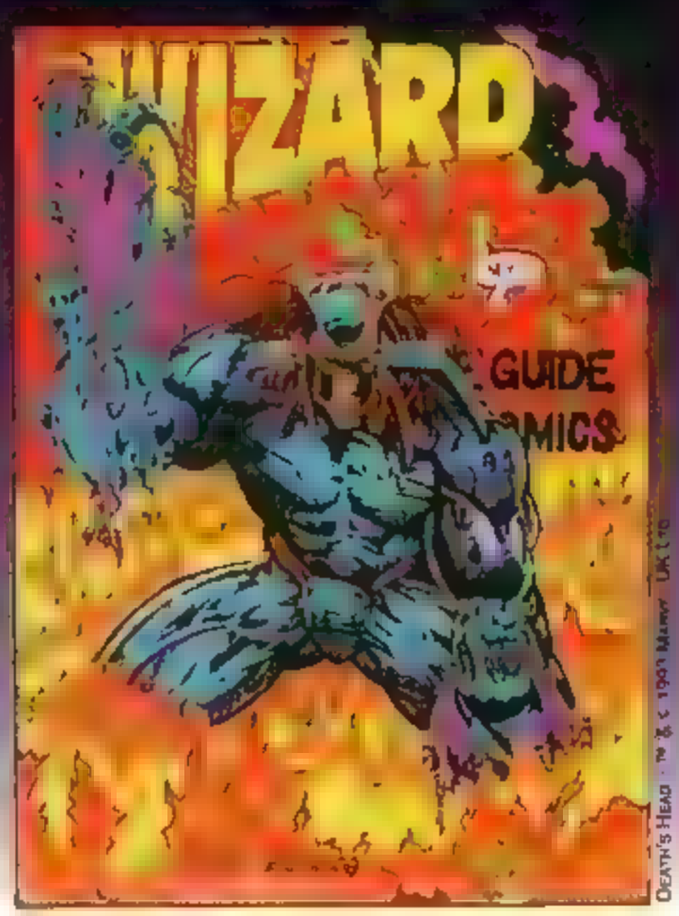
Amazing Artists
c/o Wizard Press
100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Building B-1
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977

Submissions can be on any form of un-lined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, etc). Neon or metallic inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork--mail them flat to avoid damage. All submissions are non-returnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Valiant Comics are the sole judges of the Gold *Eternal Warrior* contest, and all decisions are final. Good Luck!

[illegible] **or creatively rendered entry dealing with their respective properties or themes. So what are you waiting for? Sharpen those pencils and good luck!**

Jimmy Cheung
Hanwell, London, England

Chris Battle
Santa Monica, CA



Jesse Palon
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada Age: 21

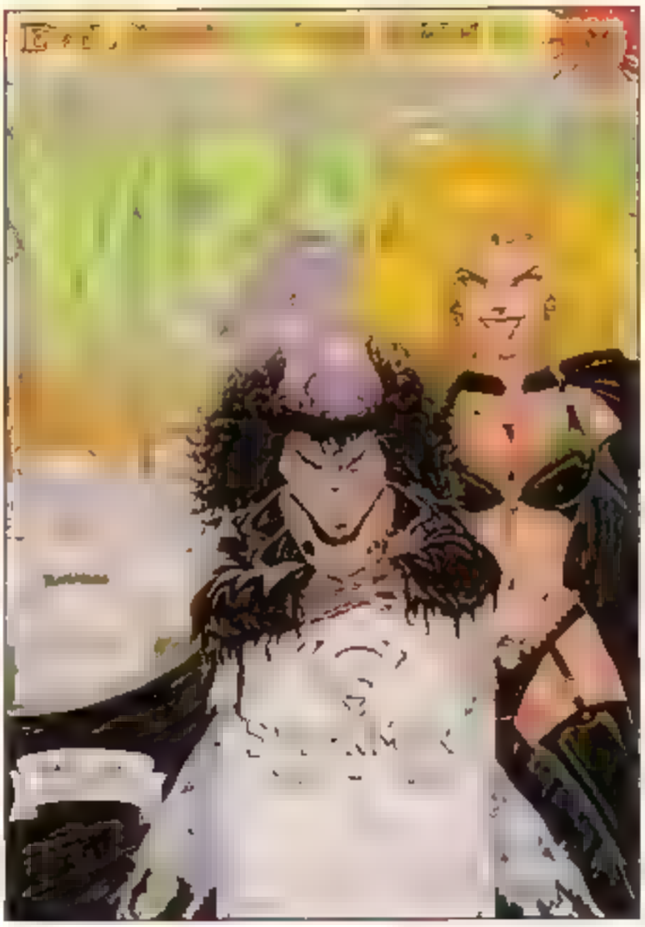
Jack Gray
Aurora, CO Age: 24

John Torrisi
Carmel, NY Age: 31

James "Lee" King
Decatur, AL Age: 21

Adam McDaniel
Bound Brook, NJ Age: 19

Sandy Carruthers
Prince Edward Island, Canada

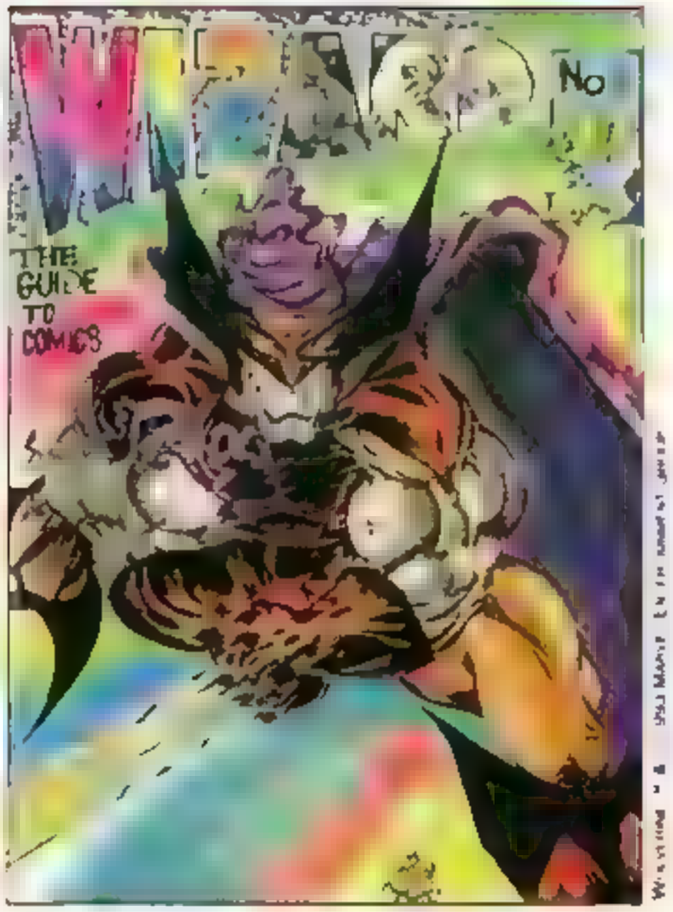


Travis Cook
Saginaw, TX

Eric Hanson
Richmond, VA Age: 18

Alexis Schprejer
Hallandale, FL

Joachim Gmoser
Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada Age: 21



David Gonzales
San Antonio, TX Age: 22

My Kind of HERO

To help promote the creation of new characters and to motivate creators to use their imaginations, Image Comics and Wizard Press [illegible] Gold Foil Supreme [illegible] and a set of the Gold Foil Wizard Comic Con [illegible] My Kind Of Hero published.

BLOOD LINE

Created By Tim McDonald, age 17; Yuba City, CA

Secret Identity: Steven Clage
Current Occupation: Photographer
Citizenship: United States
Legal Status: Vigilante
Marital Status: Single
Base of Operations: New York, NY
Height: 5' 8"
Weight: 180 lbs.
Eye Color: Blue
Hair Color: Blonde
Powers: Blood Line is a superhuman with heightened physical attributes. He has strength beyond that of the average human, which allows him to lift extremely heavy objects and inflict extensive damage in combat. Blood Line can also jump upwards several storeys. In addition, he has a very fast healing factor.
Origin: Steven Clege was an aggressive photojournalist who specialized in capturing images of war, crime, famine, poverty...all manner of pain. At some point, the constant exposure to human suffering made him snap, and Clege's latent superpowers came to the fore. With the realization of his powers, Clege decided to become the masked vigilante known as Blood Line.

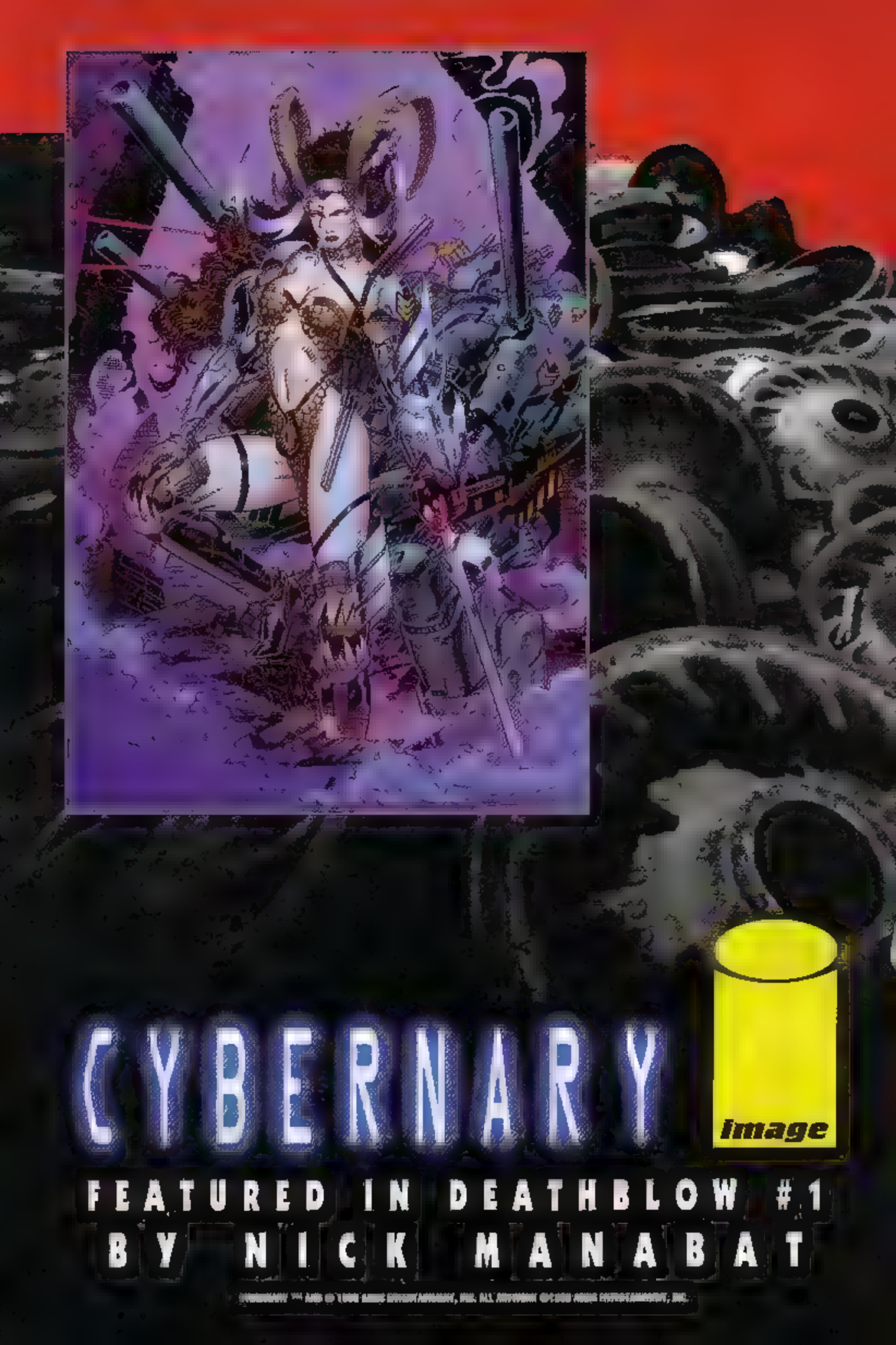
KISMET

Created By Nathan C. Weber; Washington, DC

Alias: Trisha Lachesis Fate
Occupation: Computer Programmer
Marital Status: Single
Base of Operations: Monument City, NY
Race: African-American
Height: 177.8 cm **Weight:** 59.1 kg **Age:** 33 years
Eye Color: Chestnut **Hair Color:** Black
Physical Abilities: High-tensile muscles allow Kismet to lift 9,072 kg. With a high-density, low-weight skeleton, she can sustain running speeds of up to 122.3 kph for up to two hours. Increased ATP production allows her body to more efficiently utilize food, she can recycle waste to survive for extended periods on water alone, and she can live in a non-oxygen atmosphere. Kismet has increased stamina, immunity to illness, and damage repair system. She has extended vision, hearing and olfactory senses. Her brain efficiency has been increased 50 percent, and a ROM chip implant gives her martial arts skill.
Weapons: katana, dagger, small high-powered crossbow
Origin: Orphaned at age five by a hotel fire, Trisha Fate was kidnapped from an orphanage by Dr. Soho, an eccentric geneticist whose intent was to subdue the federal government with a squad of mega-females. Trisha escaped before being conditioned, and now uses her abilities to fight violent crime.

For instructions on submitting My Kind of Hero entries, see the instructions for Amazing Art on page 84.
Text shown here may have been edited to fit.

STORMWATCH
SCOTT CLARK • TREVOR SCOTT
THE BIGGEST BY THE BEST
image


CYBERNARY
image
FEATURED IN DEATHBLOW #1
BY NICK MANABAT

WIZARD'S REALM

BY DORIS SCHWARTZ

Because we will be discussing the winners of the contest from *Wizard* #16, we have no room for letters or game reviews in this month's column.

Choosing the winners for the contests in issue #16 was probably one of the most difficult tasks I have ever faced. Each story was exciting and well written, and the art in most cases was not only adequate but of professional quality. In order to choose a winner from among the many contenders, I created a point system, utilizing the information you had from *Central Casting*. We used the same point system for both the art and story contests. One point was given for each piece of information taken from the character description. One point was subtracted for each incorrect use of information found in the description. (This was not necessary for the art contest.)

Example: "I was the [legitimate], [first born], son of a [deposed king], my [only sibling] was my [younger brother]" would be given one plus (+) for each of the points mentioned in brackets above, totaling 5+. However, a minus (-) was given for any misuse of information. "I received my [scar of valor] while fighting alongside my [older brother]." Additional (+) was given for the reference to the [scar of valor], however he lost one point (-) for the incorrect reference to an [older brother]. His total score for this paragraph was +5 (+6-1=+5)

Many of you wrote fantastic stories that contained every point mentioned in the description and were truly made of the words the best DMs weave. One person even wrote his story on parchment, but it was a novella of over 2,000 words...more than I get to write this column. I had to eliminate many entries from contention because they did not stay within the limit of 300 words. It would not be fair to those of you who worked hard, paring your stories down to the correct limit. As a writer myself who has to work within a word limit, I did keep in contention those worthy entries that did not exceed 360 words.

Another problem was lateness of entries. If they were postmarked by December 10th, I kept them in contention. However, I could not include any postmarked later, although I am still getting entries in January.

A Man Named Hal

Congratulations to Dan Michel of East Moriches, NY, who named our hero Sir Halcyon the Acclaimed. Halcyon, a fabled bird identified with the Kingfisher, was supposed to have the power to calm the winds and waves during the winter solstice. And, to acclaim is to salute by shouting and cheering. The name comes from the two unusual occurrences at the time of his birth: Sudden unreasonably beautiful weather during a winter storm, at the moment of his birth; and the heralding of his birth by all of the canines in the area. We will henceforth and forever call our hero Prince Hal, or Hal for short.

The Legend of Prince Hal

"Only I escaped capture from the orc band and their monstrous troll leader. I knew that I must sneak back into our camp and liberate the others. I slew five orcs before reaching the command tent. Upon entering it I was ambushed by the belligerent troll. In a few frustrating minutes a troll can regenerate all its damage. I was outclassed, but courage and wit stood by my side.

"I brought the battle outside, away from the prisoners, and toward the campfire. As I thought, the remaining orcs stayed back, fearful of their master's wrath. They watched as I thrust my blade deep into the belly of the beast, and maneuvered the troll into the flames where it couldn't regenerate the damage fast enough.

"I leaned hard into the fire, holding my opponent down with my blade, lest he escape. The sword's hilt burned as I leaned against it, leaving its imprint on any part of my body it touched. My right eye felt it would burst from the radiant heat. I didn't leave the searing flames, until the killer of many good men was less than ashes.

"Turning around, ready to face the orcs, I saw that my newly escaped companions had felled them. I was congratulated on discovering my adversary's weakness, and my battle, and informed that the troll had murdered my beloved mentor. This is what has caused my dark side, a hatred that grows tenfold whenever I enter combat—its image, that of the troll, regenerates, causing me to become that much more ferocious in battle.

"Later I found that the camp was

built on a fairy mound, and as a compensation for protecting them, the fairies rewarded me with my armor that regenerates after battle. They also healed most of my wounds, except for my right eye, which did burst from the heat, and the ironic scar branded upon my chest by my own blazing sword."

Congratulations to David Wilcox of Carolina Beach, NC for his portrait of Prince Hal.

PRINCE HAL AS RENDERED BY CONTEST WINNER DAVID W[illegible]

Hal's Ongoing Quest

And now to our current contest, written and illustrated by game designer and illustrator Lee Trotter...

In a desperate race against time, Hal reached out and frantically turned the handle of the door before him. As he had suspected, it turned easily but didn't stop turning as a door handle should. Instead it turned much as a faucet handle would. Round and round grinding ever closer to the door itself. "I was right, the danger of this room is the deadly gas which streams in through the eyes of the carved sentry! Those poor people must have been trying to save themselves by using the grapnel and rope to get closer to the fresh air from the chimneys. If only they realized that the door's handle would have stopped the gas, it would have saved their lives."

Even as he thought this, his actions were taking effect. As the handle turned closer to the door, metal sheets were slowly sliding down over the open eyes of the sentries, blocking off the gas and giving the impression that with their mission complete they were going to sleep. After another moment of effort, the gas jets were closed, and with a final turn the door handle clicked to a stop.

Almost instantly the door began to rumble upward, disturbing the dust on both the inside and outside of the door.

Hal, now having learned caution, closely examined the interior of the doorway, and immediately noticed a message carved into the left hand side of the door frame. The message read as follows: "There is safety in the path of the gods to the North, but the fall of he who strays will be great!"

"Hmm, paths are on the ground, so I think an examination of the floor is in order." Hal knelt at the room's entrance and looked closely at the floor. Ahead of him was an unbroken layer of dust, disturbed only by the door's opening. There, all but hidden by the dust, was a large letter crudely carved in the floor's square tile. (see Illustration 1)

"Aha, the answer to this room's puzzle is simple. All I must do is follow the path marked with the names of the gods! Alas, the dust obscures the letters and I can't read anything until it is removed!"

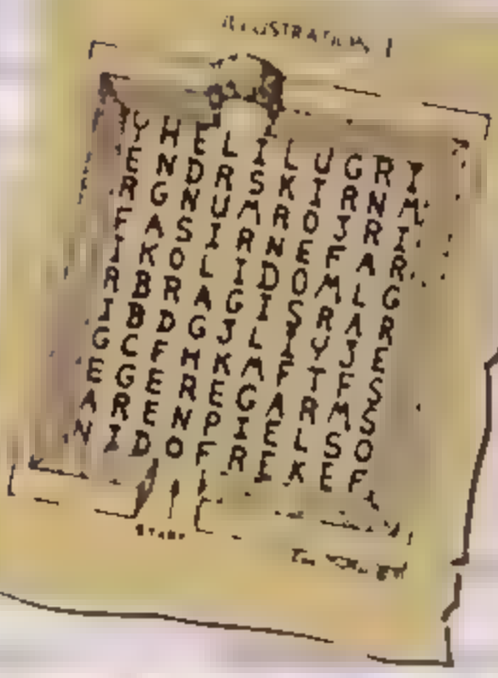


ILLUSTRATION 1

Can You Help Hal?

This month's contest consists of two parts.

1. Devise a way of removing the dust from an area of floor at least six feet long, without stepping on the floor within the area, using only the items listed: regular clothing with boots and a cloak, weapons and armor, a small water skin, a pack with a bedroll and two torches.

2. You must follow the path of the gods in an unbroken chain from the entrance to the room to the arch at the far end.

Write out the list of names in order on your entry. Hint: I used TSR's *Legends and Lore* (1st Edition *AD&D*) as a source for the gods' names.

This month's prize will be a second edition *AD&D Legends and Lore* from TSR. Good luck!

Don't forget, the Wizard's Game Room is only on the West Coast. Send your entries to:
Wizard's Game Room Contest #6
c/o I Love Games Too
111 West Ave, Palizada
San Clemente, CA 92672
And remember, if you are near San Clemente, call us at (714) 498-3895 or, better yet, come play with us! See you next month!

TOYING

WITH BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

Reader Mail!!

Greetings to all of you out in toyland! In this issue, I'm not going to ramble on about some silly life story or gripe about a toy line. (I'm sure you're all giving sighs of relief, but you're out of luck because there's always next month!) This month, it's Reader Appreciation Month, with a full column dedicated to you, my thoughtful readers! I've been kinda lax with the mail, these past few months, so here goes...!

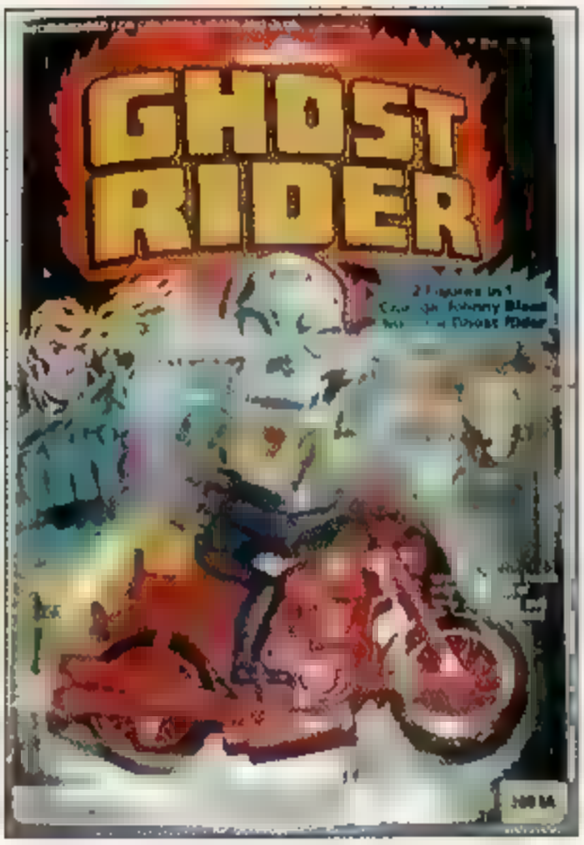
John M. Munjak of Lenexa, KS asks if it is the obligation of us toy collectors to purchase each and every uninspiring figure of a toy line? It's funny that you want my opinion on this, John, because I am in a similar dilemma. You see, out of the entire X Force line, the figure I hate the most is Forearm. I still haven't bought him, and I'm not sure if I will. My answer to you (and others in a similar situation) is—of course not. Dedicated or not, you, the consumer, must buy what you like. If you don't, toy companies will keep dishing out the same lame-o figures, and we don't want *that* to happen, now, do we?

Triple Your Cobras

Jon Peck of Hamden, CT tells me that the G.I. Joe Cobra Commander has three different faces and is scarce. He also says that the American Gladiators line has a Zap figure that is also scarce. Thanks for the tips, Jon!

Eric Londergan of Dedham, MA has a few questions—1) Which of the new X-Men line are the rare ones? 2) Can you tell me the value of Bob the Goon? 3) Is the Flash with the Turbo platform worth more than the other Flashes? 4) Did I make a great investment buying two John Connors or was this guy just a jerk? 5) How do you keep and store your figures?

Whew! 1) The rarest that I know of are Sabretooth and Deadpool. "Rare" isn't the right word, though, it should be "not as plentiful." 2) Just last week I was looking for a Bob the Goon figure, I think he's going up in price. I would price him at about $8. 3) Not really. 4) You made a pretty sound investment. I can't find him at all. 5) None of your business! Actually, I don't keep them in a box at all. I put them on shelves in my room for all to see. I believe that toys are meant to be opened and not stored away; I'm not sure I felt that way a few years ago, but I do now. I have more to say on this, but I'll save it for a future column.



Look at this! It's the Ghost Rider figure made in the mid '70s. The figure came with two heads— Ghost Rider's head is on the figure and Johnny Blaze's head is on the right side of the package. Have you ever seen the like?

Venom Brains!

Dave Brown of Boone, NC says that his friend has a talking Venom that says something that only a few Venoms say. I believe you are referring to the line, "I want to eat your brain!" This line put parents in an uproar, and I don't know why because the quote was put on the card for the parent to see before he/she bought it! But, I don't believe your friend's Venom says anything different than any other Venom.

Nick Rusakowicz of Yorktown Heights, NY says that the Cable figure card explains that the figure has removable armor and a glow-in-the-dark-eye, when, in truth, it does not. I tried this out myself, Nick, seeing that I never saw the fine print on the card. You were right! I searched all

over Cable for something removable with no luck; then I turned off my light, and still no luck! How cool would it be if they worked?

Shawn Low Wei of Singapore wants a Toying Around Pen Pal section. How 'bout it folks? The ball's in your court.

Improving Your Figure

Adam Hamburger of Chalmette, LA recently sent me a photo of a homemade Lobo and writes, "If you have no intention of printing my figure, please tell me. Also, tell me why and what I can do to make my figures better." You're a brave man, Adam. I'll say this as best I can, with the intention of helping you and others. No, I'm afraid I am not going to print your figure. It's not really bad or anything, it's just that the photo itself is too small; try to make the figure fit nicely in the print (fill the frame head to toe). Second of all, many people send me Lobos, which makes it a contest of all of the Lobos, and I must choose which one is the best. To make yours the best, there must be something kinda different about it—to make it look as if you found something to add to the figure that no one else will think of. Yours happens to be one of the better ones, though. My only recommendation would be to change your Lobo's flat hair to the wacked-out hair that the Main Man has. I'll be doing a special article, soon, where I will create (right before your very eyes) three homemade figures and break down the thought process behind them step by step. I hope that helps, Adam.

Before I Go...

Before I end this column, I just want to address an issue that disturbs me. Every month, I receive lots of mail. In that mail, some people ask me questions and most send me pictures of their figures. While I absolutely love all of the above, I sometimes get the feeling that nobody reads the actual article because it is rare when I get comments on it. I would really like to know what you all think of what I am saying. Before I started printing pictures, people would comment on my article, because there was nothing else to comment on. I hope that what I am saying isn't getting lost in the ornaments of Toying Around.

If you just want to chat, that's fine. I read every bit of mail, so don't think your comments will never reach me. I love hearing what you have to say, so say it! I think I've been writing some controversial stuff, lately, and I'm getting no feedback. If you are going to write, please comment on what you read. Thanks.

Well, I am outta here for now. Thanks for reading.

NEXT ISSUE: The 1993 Toy Fair Review!

This Deadman figure comes to us from the creative hands of Jeff Beckley of Ypsilanti, MI. Our spirit friend used to be a Super Powers Martian Manhunter.

The Black Archer of the Squadron Supreme (one of my favorite mini-series, by the way) was a Silver Surfer and was crafted by Trevor Hills of Brockton, MA.

However, one of my favorite teams of all time is, no doubt, the Legion of Super-Heroes! Presented here are the original 24 members, created from G.I. Joes and Barbies. The costumes were designed by M.S. Spivey and the rest by their owner, Roddy W. Garcia of Houston, TX. Congratulations!

BLACK ARCHER ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES AND DEADMAN ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

Every month in Wizard we throw the hardest questions your way, and only a select few have what it takes to score a perfect 30 points. Think you can? Give it a shot. This month we're grading you alongside the worst things to find at the bottom of a bowl of milk after you just finished the cereal. The more unpleasant the discovery, the higher you score. Answers on page 193.

How well did you fare?

score	rank
0-5	A greasy dreadlock
6-13	Lucky the Leprechaun... naked
14-25	Cap'n Crunch's bloody mustache clippings
26-29	The Trix rabbit's milk-soaked corpse
30	A severed varicose vein

1) The A.B.C in *A.B.C. Warriors* stands for:
A) Acidic-Battling-Constructs
B) Atomic-Bacterial-Chemical
C) American Broadcasting Company
D) Ant. Ber'shian-Commando

2) The sorceress Zatanna works her spells by:
A) Speaking backwards
B) Altering probability
C) Speaking in rhymes
D) Casting them through her familiar

3) Metallo has a heart of:
A) Stone
B) Gold
C) Kryptonite
D) Nth Metal

4) The Human Bomb was a member of what team?
A) Freedom Fighters
B) Freedom Force
C) The Blasters
D) Impact (Oh wait, that whole thing was a bomb..)

5) Which hero died in battle with Eclipso in *Eclipso: The Darkness Within* #2?
A) G'nort
B) Golden Eagle
C) Superman
D) Starman

6) Howard the Duck first appeared in what Marvel comic?
A) *Howard the Duck* #1
B) *Marvel Premiere* #17
C) *Adventure Into Fear* #19
D) *Chamber of Chills* #18

7) The computer Prof. X uses to scan for mutants is called.
A) Cerebro
B) Isaac
C) H.A.L.
D) Mother Box

8) Besides Nurse Chapel, Majel Barrett has played three other roles in the *Star Trek* universe. Pick the one she didn't play.
A) The female computer voice
B) Deanna Troi's mum
C) The Romulan captain who was hot for Spock
D) Number One

9) The Molten Man is the brother to which Spider-Man supporting character?
A) Maria Madison
B) Betty Brant
C) Liz Allen
D) Gwen Stacy

10) When the Fantastic Four first battled Galactus, he used what robotic construct against the team?
A) The Destroyer
B) The Ultimate Nullifier
C) Taa-ll
D) The Punisher

11) Caliban had a crush on which mutant character?
A) Rachel Summers
B) Ororo Munroe
C) Jean-Paul Brebier (...hmm...)
D) Kitty Pryde

12) What does the TIE in TIE-Fighter stand for:
A) Turbo-Inertia-Energizer
B) Tuned-Ion-Electric
C) Thruster-Ionized-Energy
D) Twin-Ion-Engines

13) "Snap" Wilson is the name of the one-time alter-ego of what superhero?
A) The Falcon
B) Jack of Hearts
C) Black Panther
D) D-Man

14) The "hero" of DC's *Hellblazer* series is:
A) Alec Holland
B) Tim Hunter
C) John Constantine
D) Jason Blood

15) Richard Ryder is better known as:
A) Powerhouse
B) Rocket Racer
C) Bloodstone
D) Nova

16) Kull was the ruler of what ancient land?
A) The Savage Land
B) Atlantis
C) Cimmeria
D) Aquilonia

17) Who teamed with Sabretooth to plague Power Man and Iron Fist for several years?
A) The Cobra
B) Shrapnel
C) Whirlwind
D) The Constrictor

18) Warpath is the younger brother to what ex X-Man?
A) Thunderbird
B) The Mimic
C) The Changeling
D) Erik the Red

19) The evil Dr. Goot plagued what comic-book character?
A) Ralph Snart
B) Megaton Man
C) The Tick
D) Flaming Carrot

20) Captain Carrot was the leader of what super team?
A) New Zoo Review
B) Legion of Super-Pets
C) The Zoo Crew
D) The Ani-Men

21) Amanda Sefton, Nightcrawler's old girlfriend, was a:
A) Mutant
B) Sorceress
C) Airplane stewardess
D) Both B & C

22) Adrian Chase, DC's Vigilante, died:
A) by suicide
B) in *Crisis on Infinite Earths*
C) at Deadshot's hands
D) when gunned down by police

23) In *Terminator*, what was the name of John Conner's father:
A) Matthew Biehn
B) Michael Rahn
C) Dwayne Hicks
D) Kyle Reese

24) Ax, the Valiant villain who recently lost a limb to Bloodshot, wears what type of armor?
A) X-O Commando
B) X-O Manowar
C) X-O Mercenary
D) X-O Dreadnought

25) What do Tribbles hate?
A) Quadrotriticale
B) Chicken salad sandwiches & coffee
C) Klingons
D) Romulans

26) In *Watchmen*, who murdered Rorshach?
A) Ozymandias
B) Dr. Manhattan
C) The Comedian
D) That giant squid thing that Ozymandias created landed on him and squished 'im.

27) What X-Men villains were original members of The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants?
A) Toad & Mastermind
B) Quicksilver & Unus
C) Scarlet Witch & The Vanisher
D) All of the above

28) The Spider villain with the pointy boots is:
A) The Tarantula
B) The Cobalt Man
C) Pinwheel
D) Pincushion

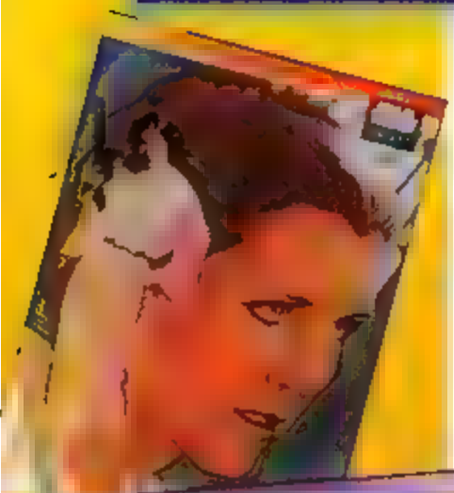
29) In the second issue of the *Hulk* and the second issue of the second series of the *She-Hulk*, what villain[s] did they face?
A) The Meta Master
B) The Toad Men
C) The Ringmaster
D) Tyrannus

30) The hero that was "The wildest Super-hero ever...because he's real!" was:
A) The Shield
B) The Web
C) The Guardian
D) The Human Fly

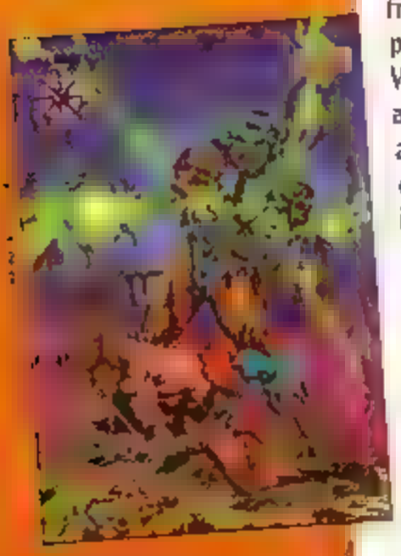
*

THE WIZARD OF CARDS

BY STEPHEN SHAMUS



Topps Star Wars Galaxy cards looks to be the collector set of 93!



Valiant and Upper Deck are set to revolutionize the non-sports card market.

This month there is lots of good news coming your way. Many new releases are on the way and are sure to excite all non-sports card collectors.

Starting this month off with a bang is Topps. Topps has two sets due out in March and another two on the horizon. The big set is the *Star Wars Galaxy* trading cards. These are a direct-market exclusive and will only be found at your local retailers. *S.W.G.* will consist of 140 different cards drawn by many of the top artists in the comics field, including Dale Keown, Sam Kieth, Bill Sienkiewicz, Walt Simonson, Jim Valentino, Joe Quesada, and many more. The cards will showcase never-before-seen art and photography from the Lucasfilm archives, plus cards depicting greeting cards, comic-book cover art and character profiles. Every card will also be UV coated. No set would be complete without chase cards, and this set has plenty. First there are six spectra-etch foil cards drawn by Walt Simonson that will be randomly inserted in foil packs. The spectra cards feature a single character from the *Star Wars* trilogy, but when placed together, form a larger image. Very cool. But wait, there's more. The artists who worked on the set will be autographing a limited number of cards, and they too will be randomly inserted into the packs. In next month's *Wizard*, we will be giving away a limited number of sets, uncut sheets, and uncut spectra sheets, but more on that next issue.

The second set due out shortly from Topps feature those heroes on a half-shell, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The Turtles have returned to star in their third feature *film*—*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III. A Feudal Fable* (see Hollywood Heroes, p 33). Following the successful first two movies will be tough (though the second one kinda sucked), but let's hope they pull it off. This time around, the Turtles travel back in time and do battle with Samurai warriors in feudal Japan. The set will be 88 cards with 11 stickers and 12 comic art cards.

The last two sets that Topps has planned will not be out for awhile, but we wanted to mention them here first. Topps has obtained the license for the *Jurassic Park* cards, and will release the cards in conjunction with the movie due out this summer. Dinosaurs are hot (thanks to Steven Spielberg), and if the movie is as successful as we've been hearing this set should do fantastic. The other is based on Arnold Schwarzenegger's next movie, also due out this summer—*The Last Action Hero*. Ah-nuld is the most popular actor in the world, and this movie probably won't disappoint. This was a great catch for Topps and should go over great with the fans.

Skybox has some terrific sets of its own on the way. They have just announced that they will be releasing a *Marvel Universe* series 4 set. The 180-card set will feature all-new, all-original art. In addition to the usual lineup of superheroes, supervillains, and rookies, there will be three new categories. Marvel UK, Alien Races and Unsolved Mysteries. Card backs will also contain more original artwork. This set has some great chase cards, too. There will be 13 in all, including nine foil stamped cards featuring characters from the new Marvel 2099 series, three "Then & Now" full color holithograms (a combination hologram and lithogram courtesy of George White), and one super 3-D card of Spider-Man. These will ship late May, and will undoubtably be in high demand.

Skybox has also announced they will be producing trading cards of the top characters from Milestone Media, the new line of books from DC Comics. The first set will be *Milestone: The Dakota Universe* trading cards. The set will consist of 100 cards featuring Static, Hardware, Icon, Blood Syndicate and the other lovable characters from the

Dakota Universe. Again, chase cards will be present, but no information was available as of press time.

The last set due out from Skybox is a 90-card set based on the super-popular Disney movie, *Aladdin*. Every card in the set will feature a high quality gold-foil border framing the artwork. Also, in every pack there will be a glow-in-the-dark activity card that the kids will love. Not enough? Okay, then how about three spectra-etch cards randomly inserted? That should do it.

In very exciting news, Valiant has signed with Upper Deck to produce a licensed set of trading cards in 1993. Unless you've been living in a cave the last six months, you all know Valiant books are the hottest books in the back-issue market today, and Upper Deck is the hottest trading card manufacturer. The promo card features Turok and X-O Manowar and is absolutely stunning. The cards will be released in either June or July in conjunction with the Image and Valiant cross-over series recently announced. These cards may revolutionize the non-sports market.

While we're on the subject of Upper Deck, two of the Image boys—Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee to be exact—will be drawing the superstars of the NBA in Upper Deck's '92-'93 hi series basketball. The cards, called *Fantimation*, will be very similar in nature to those that Rob and Jim drew in Upper Deck's hi number football series late last year. Those currently sell for $45 for a complete set of 10, so these should be very popular as well.

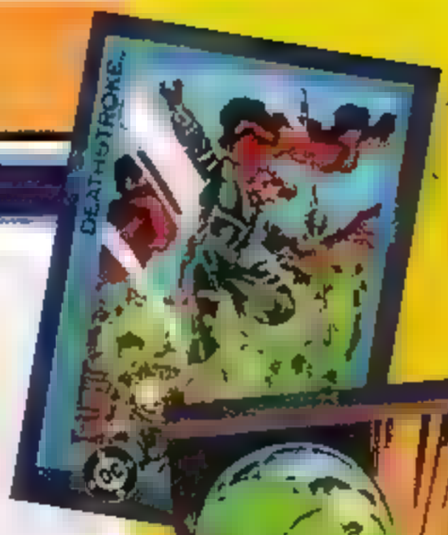
Comic Images has two new sets coming out in March. The first is *Hildebrandt II*. This set will contain 90 cards along with, of course, six randomly inserted chromium cards. As a special bonus, there will be randomly inserted signed cards. The second is a 90-card set from Moebius. Again, there will be six chromium cards randomly inserted. In this series, 100 lucky collectors will win chromium press sheets, and one extremely lucky collector will win an actual drawing by Moebius.

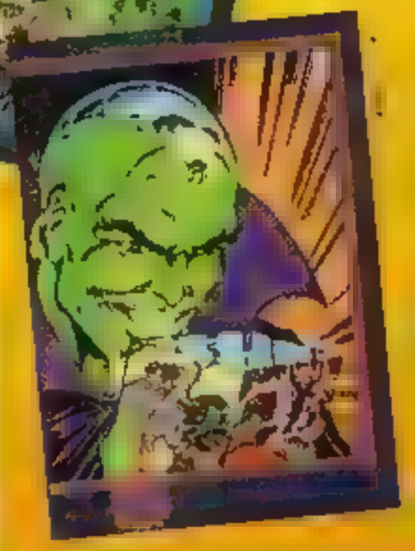
Another set we'll preview this month is from the Collect A-Card Corp. They are releasing series 3 of the very popular *Harley-Davidson* cards. The set will contain 100 cards and collectors can find randomly inserted 24-kt. gold cards in foil packs. Factory sets will also include a bonus hologram.

The last set we'll cover this month comes from Harris Comics. Appearing in this issue of *Wizard* will be the first of a two-piece die-cut trading card set. The first card features Cain and a provocatively shaped cut-out, which fits over the second card available only in *Cain* #1.

The *X-Men II* and *DC Cosmic Teams* should be on your local retailers' shelves by now. We will be listing the cards next issue, and if you have any pricing information please send it to Wizard of Cards c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. The *X-Men II* has some great insert cards including nine foil cards, three holithograms, and one super-3-D card. The nine foil cards are Juggernaut, Cable, Cyclops, Magneto, Professor X, Rogue, Sentinels, Storm, and Wolverine. The three holithograms are Cable, Magneto and Storm (1 per box). The Super 3-D card is Wolverine and there is one per case. The card is stunning and should go for some serious money. The DC cards will have the spectra cards, so they should do very nicely.

One final note: In our most recent Special Edition, *The 100 Most Collectible Comics*, there were 1,000 signed and numbered Will Eisner cards. Congratulations to those of you who lucked out and got one.



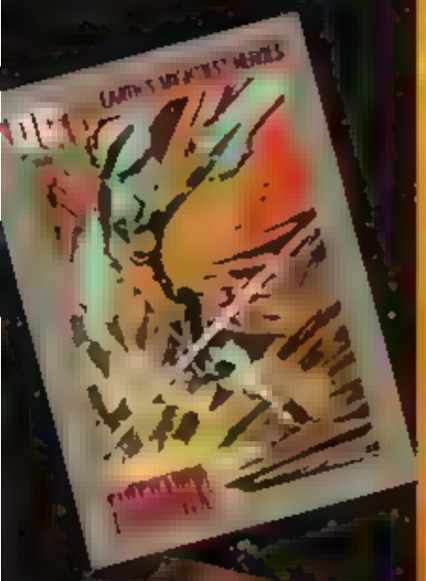


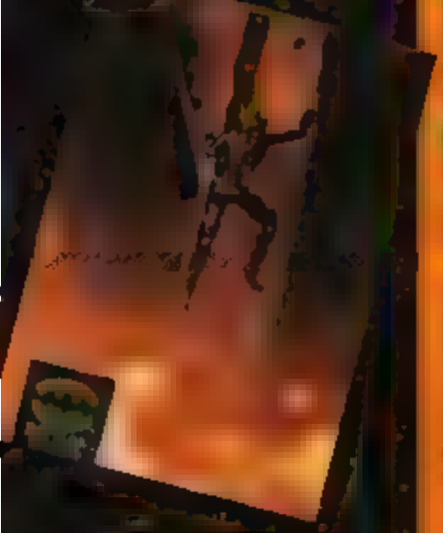
DC's cosmic heroes will again grace the shelves, courtesy of SkyBox

Marvel's mutants return in SkyBoxs all new chase-loaded X-Men Series II

wizard card price guide

THE SETS ARE ALL COMIC IMAGES UNLESS NOTED.





Complete Set 8.00

Red Series

BATMAN-1989

BATMAN RETURNS-1992

BATMAN RETURNS

75 Cards

BEVERLY HILLS 90210

10-20

BORIS II-1991

CONAN-1988 (#24)

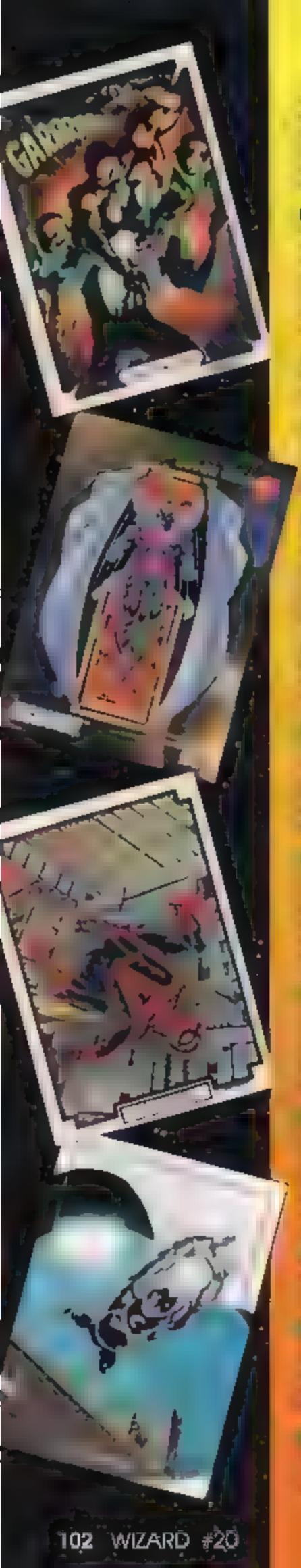
DC COSMIC CARDS

DISNEY COLLECTOR CARDS

ELVI

FRAZETTA-1991

GARBAGE PAIL



GARFIELD

GHOSTBUSTERS

HELLRAISER

INDIANA JONES

JIM LEE-1990

JOHN BYRNE 1989

JOHN F. KENNEDY

KING KONG

LITTLE MERMAID

MASH

MCFARLANE-1989

MCFARLANE ERA SP DERMAN

MICHAEL JACKSON

MIKE ZECK

MINNIE AND M

MORK AND MINDY

PLAYBOY

Complete Se
Single

PUNISHER-1990

Commor

PUNISHER-1992

Complet

Singles 10- 20

SAVAGE DRAGON

Commons
Prism

Complete Se 2.00

SHADOWHAWK

SILVER PRISM SET

COMIC IMAGES

26 00

45 Card

SHADOW HAWK-1992

Single For

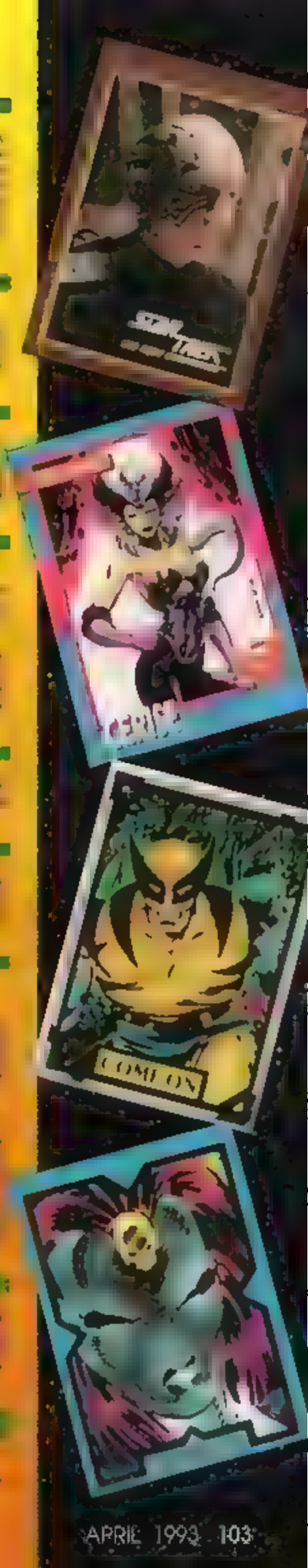
TERMINATOR 2

Chromiur

WOLVERINE

Series

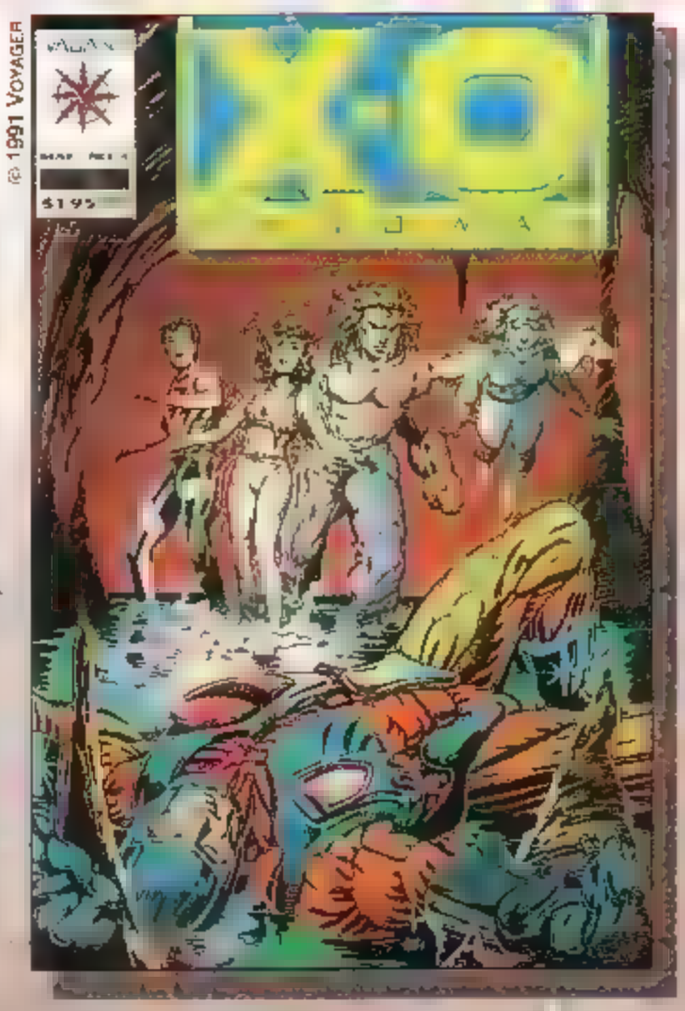
YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES



COMIC

X-O MANOWAR #4

ARTIST: Mike Manley
WRITER: Engelhart & Layton
PUBLISHER: Valiant
RELEASE DATE: May 1991



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Hey! A Valiant book. Cool. Thought I was in the top ten hottest comics section for a second. Anyway, what makes this little humdinger hotter than the top of Captain Picard's head in the middle of June? Well, by gum, we get to see Zepplin of Harbinger taking a shower! Yeah, alright! Nah, that doesn't appear in this issue (which is good), but we *do* get the very first appearance of a certain saxophone-playing avenger of New Orleans. Yup, Jack Boniface, better known as Shadowman, the slightly off-kilter scourge of the underworld, pops his kisser into this book for a brief one-panel cameo. If you have the book but you've never seen the dude, check out page 11, bottom panel. Plays a mean sax. Now before you start screaming about "this is just like that lame Wolverine cameo crap in *Hulk* #180," relax, I agree. But just like that issue of *Hulk*, this book has serious potential to become a hot little number (no, it's not going to shoot up to $75 tomorrow, give it a while). It's already worth $14 (wonder of wonders, a Valiant back issue that's costly), but that's because of its low print run and Valiant's current hyper-popularity, just think what's gonna happen when this Shadowman info thing gets around. That means when this book finally begins to catch on, it's not going to go from a measly couple of coins to a couple of bucks. It's gonna go from its already impressive price tag to some serious buckage. And hey, if none of this stuff tickles your fancy, check this issue out for the semi-awesome Harbinger vs. X-O fight, where Aric slaps Torque around, hoses down Flamingo and kayos Sting. All very cool stuff.

WATCH

FANTASTIC FOUR SPECIAL #5

ARTIST: Jack Kirby
WRITER: Stan Lee
PUBLISHER : Marvel
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 1967

Geez, now this is a pretty old book here. 1967. Man, I wasn't even born yet. Well anyway, like the *X-O Manowar* book on the other page, this book already has a sizable price tag. We'll get to the main reason this book is here in a sec, but first the other things this book has going for it. It's the first appearance of major super-villain the Psycho Man, it has early appearances of The Inhumans and The Black Panther, and Mr. Fantastic announces that he's about to become a dad! Hey, cigars all around! Okay, I know these are all neat reasons to make the book "warm," but what does it have that makes it hot? It's the first time the Silver Surfer (back in the days when he wore them cosmic boxer shorts) starred in his own solo story. After the lead F.F. story and the countless pin-up pages, we're treated to "the Sentinel of the Spaceways!" backup story where we find our buddy Norrin doing a bit of soul-searching (and his usual "buzzing insect" jargon on the human race), when he comes across the overly ugly construct known as Quasimodo, trapped in its immobile mechanical body. The Surfer creates a robotic body for the dude, granting him the freedom he so desired. Once free to move about, Quasi reveals his true nature and goes on a rampage, attacking innocents and doing some pretty hefty property damage to Manhattan. Not that this is any big deal in the Marvel Universe, but what makes this really a touching story (and led to the Surfer getting his own book) is when the Surfer returns, and while he's removing Quasimodo's new-found freedom, of Quasi reveals that he was created to destroy and was only doing what he was created to do. Really neat story, and considering how popular the Surfer is now, and how instrumental this book was in more firmly establishing him in the Marvel Universe, a major part of the history of comics as well.

This time around, we gas up our crystal ball to peer not only into the future of comics but the past as well. We've just closed out the old year as we write this, and having watched last year's comics from front-row seats, we can say without a doubt that 1992 was easily the most exciting year in comics to date. Image came, saw, and kicked some serious butt. It seems these boys can do no wrong. A salute from the Crystal Ball crew to everyone at Image. 1992 was amazing; let's see you do it again in '93! Kudos also go to Valiant. A couple of remarkable things about Valiant: They have never shipped a book more than two weeks late, and they have successfully avoided putting out a "dud" book. Even the much-hyped *Bloodshot* delivered everything it promised. The independent publishers came on strong in 1992, and they've certainly set some high marks for themselves to surpass in 1993.

That's not to imply that Marvel and DC stood still in '92. Marvel has impressed readers everywhere with its 2099 and Marvel UK lines, and of course, what more can you say about the job DC did on the Death of Superman saga?

1992 will also be remembered as the year that "enhanced" comics really came into their own. The inclusion of trading cards and the use of various foil and hologram effects on covers was used by a wide variety of publishers, usually with a great deal of success. This year, expect to see even more innovative concepts in cover enhancement. With last year's successes under their belts, publishers are already knocking themselves out to grab your attention in '93.

Finally, if 1992 seemed to be a year dominated by the industry's artists, 1993 is shaping up to be a year the writers take their revenge! This month presents us with several good examples of this trend.

The first book revealing itself as we peer into the crystal ball is *Sebastian O.*, of DC's Vertigo line. This three-parter is scripted by Grant Morrison, the talented writer who has impressed us with his innovative work on *Animal Man*, *Arkham Asylum* and *Doom Patrol*. Sebastian O. lives in an alternate London of the 1890s, where development of computer technology plays chaos with the Victorian culture we know from the history books. In this high-tech historical setting, Sebastian O. escapes from an asylum to seek creative revenge on the people who put him there.

Speaking of insanity, *The Complete Bojeffries Saga*, from Alan Moore and Steve Parkhouse by way of Tundra Publishing, is a typically unusual Moore tale of a family of monsters, demons and demi gods trying to survive in today's England. This is Moore at his most hilarious, and this unsung story is worth seeking out, especially if you've not had the satisfaction of reading Alan's work before. This is a much lighter story than *Watchmen* or *Spawn* #8 and a perfect introduction to one of the masters of the form.

Next up, we have an entry from Image, and if you thought we could go without mentioning *Spawn* for an issue, think again! Issue #11 teams Todd's always impressive pencils with the equally inspirational writing skills of Frank Miller. If that's not enough, French artist Geoff Darrow is drawing the interior poster. Darrow puts an impossible amount of detail into his work. If you like Todd's intricate illustrations, Darrow's pencils will blow you away too, proving once again that Todd only works with the best.

The rest of the Image line this month also shows considerable promise. Larry Stroman makes his Image debut with *Tribe* #1. The Maxx, previously seen in *Darker Image*, gets his own title by the master of visual weirdness, Sam Kieth. Finally, *Youngblood: Strike File* features the one-two punch of Rob Leifeld and Jae Lee.

Not to be outdone, Valiant has put together a solid month this time around as well. *Magnus* #25 features a new costume for Magnus as well as a very boss silver foil cover. This issue should be vital to the Valiant Universe in the coming months. It introduces the new IA (now a bird) as the Malev forces continue to total North Am. Also watch for *H.A.R.D.Corps* this month, as issue #7 introduces Hotshot to the corps. It promises to be a very good year for Valiant with tremendous projects like *Turok*, *Secret Weapons*, *X-O Manowar* #0, and the coolest cross-company team-up since X-Men/Teen Titans.

Marvel is celebrating a slew of anniversaries this month, leading off with *Uncanny X-Men* #300. This double-sized cover-enhanced issue will apparently lead into the return of Magneto. Meanwhile, Spider-Man is commemorating not one but two anniversaries: *Web of Spider-Man* #100 and *Spectacular Spider-Man* #200. Just for good measure Marvel's giving Spidey a new #1 this month too. *Spider-Man Unlimited* will be a quarterly title, and the first issue begins a 14-part crossover slime-fest with our favorite oozing Spidey villains, Venom and Carnage. This issue will feature the sleek lines of *Silver Surfer* artist Ron Lim. The storyline will cross into all of Spidey's titles.

Publishers unquestionably aren't content looking back on 1992. They've already started 1993 with a bang! Take our word for it, as we gaze into the crystal ball, that the best is yet to come!

WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN
MARK SEIFERT

PICKS

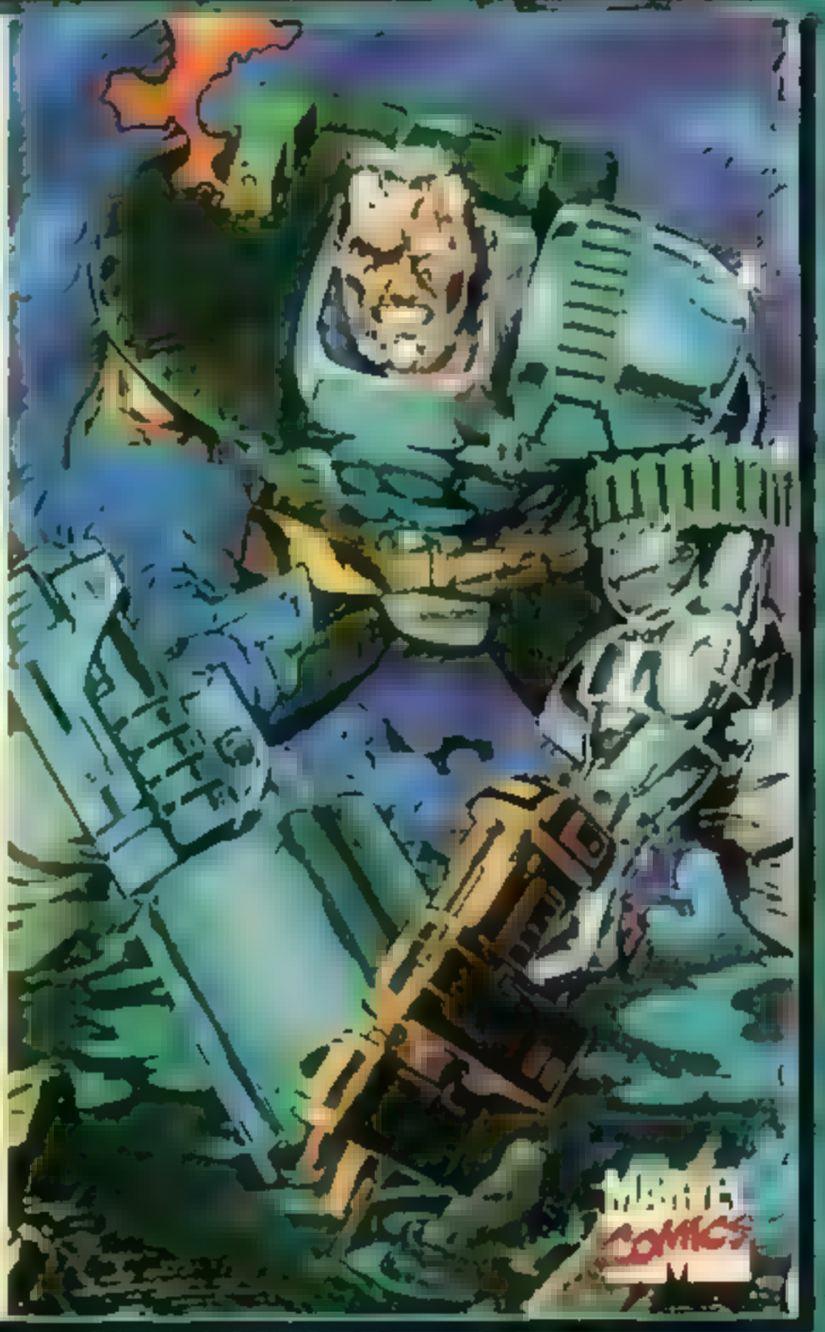
FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

Here's a listing of the hottest books shipping in March!

Cable #1

Artist: Art Thibert
Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Release Date: March 2nd
Cover Price: $3.50

Yes, it seems that at the end of "X-Cutioners Song," the mutie with the biggest guns in comics had bought the farm, bit the big one, indeed, kicked the bucket. Well, he's gotten better, vitamins and aloe, I guess. The *Cable* mini series gave us a substantial glimpse into the mysterious one's past, showing some of the exploits of the mercenary team Cable used to lead, Wild Six Pack. The introduction of this series helps to tie up a few of the loose ends from "X-Cutioners Song," like "Hey, how did he escape being blown into ground chuck at the conclusion of the story?" And after we get this bit of confusion clarified, it's time to let the action commence! Trapped in this timeline (Is he from the future? The past?), Cable gathers together his Six Pack troops, and begins a quest to insure that no one in this timeline becomes a major baddie, along the lines of a Magneto or Apocalypse. In their first confrontation as the reincarnated Six Pack, Cable and Co. tackle the new Canaanites (are they from Connecticut? Just curious), and he must defeat them in order to rescue his (hmm) wife and son. Of course, in this marvelous day and age of special (Read: gimmick) covers, no special issue would be complete without the requisite foil embossed cover. The creative end of this treat will be handled by story teller Fabian (way hot) Nicieza, while Art Thibert will be doing artwork deemed by Mr. Nicieza himself as "Butt kicking". In March, don't forget to turn on the Cable.



Uncanny X-Men #300

X-Men TM & © 1993 Marvel

Artist: John Romita Jr.
Writer: Scott Lobdell
Release Date: March 2nd
Cover Price: $3.95

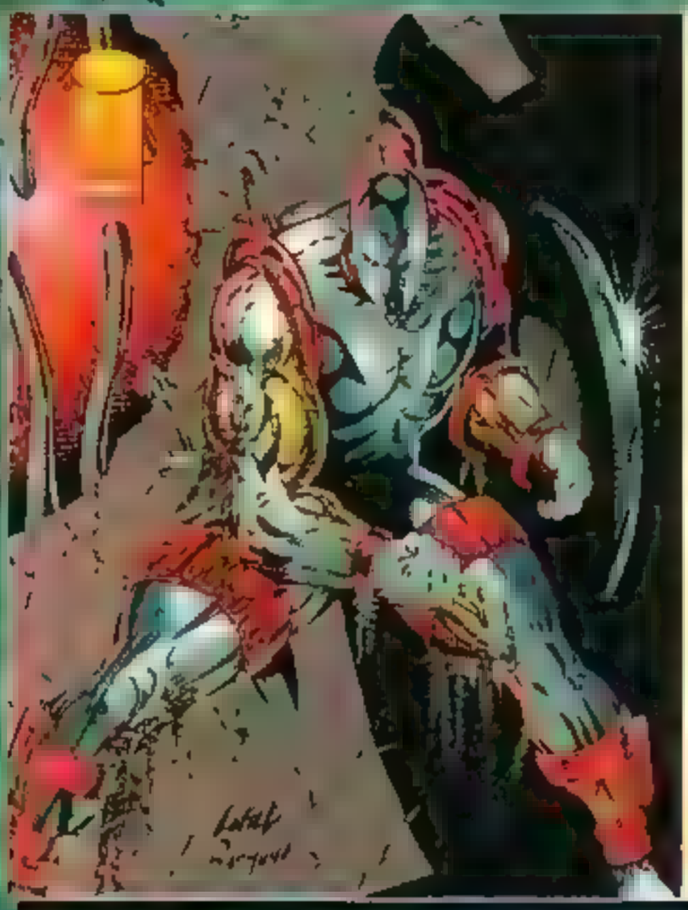
1993 marks the 30th anniversary of Marvel's favorite gaggle of genetically-enhanced misfits. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's legendary X-Men didn't always enjoy the wide-spread success they do today. For you (much) younger readers, the X-Men used to in fact be a sales dud, actually lapsing into reprints for issues #67-93. Thankfully, Chris Claremont and Dave Cockrum performed comic CPR on the title, leading the X-Men into a new era of popularity, excitement and market $ucce$$! Now, 30 years later, *Uncanny X-Men* is comicdom's flagship title, with cartoons, toys and other merchandise selling well enough for us to believe the next thirty years will be chock-full of more X-ploits from Professor X's favorite students! *Uncanny X-Men* #300 basically tosses in everything but the kitchen sink. We eager readers will be finding such X-icons as: Nightcrawler, Forge, Moira MacTaggart, Fabian Cortez, the Acolytes and clues leading up to the X-Men believing that long-since-thought-dead Magneto may not really be all that dead. *Uncanny X-Men* #300 also sports a nifty X-patterned holographic cover.

Magnus: Robot Fighter #25

Artist: James Brock
Writer: John Ostrander
Release Date: March
Cover Price: $2.95

What wonderful death, destruction, violence and chaos Mr. Ostrander has wreaked upon the unwitting citizens of the year 4002! The flagship title in the Valiant Universe has undergone a major overhaul over the past four issues, featuring large-scale destruction and the deaths of many major and supporting characters. The Malev have declared war on Humankind, and it seems those wacky freewill robots won't rest until all humans are eradicated and used for their inherent ectotheric (that would be Darque) energy. This Malev reign of terror has led to the formation of Rai and the Future Force, a band of super-powered heroes united to battle the increasing Malev menace. *Magnus* becomes the first Valiant title to celebrate it's second anniversary (Yeah, I know...*Super Mario Bros.* but, really, puh-lease!), and Valiant's giving us a great batch of reasons for blowing out the candles! We're treated to the destruction of North Am, we get the resurrection of Magnus' long-gone mentor, 1-A, and a spiffy new set of duds for Magnus! To top everything off, our Val-pals give us a silver-embossed foil cover *Magnus* #25—a great birthday celebration indeed.

Youngblood: Strike File #1



Artist: Rob Liefeld & Jae Lee
Writer: Rob Liefeld
Release Date: March
Cover Price: $2.50

The latest entry to the Image/Youngblood family comes to us in March (hopefully), under the title *Youngblood: Strike-file*. This baby focuses on the individual characters in the team. (Home team? Away team? Who can keep track?) In two ten-page stories per issue, this four-issue mini-series not only features the artwork of perennial fan-favorite Rob Liefeld, but of rapidly ascending pen-and-ink Picasso Jae Lee. The initial issue features two of the more popular characters in Youngblood, Chapel and Diehard. The Diehard half of this issue finds the government-hired hand up to his elbows in battle against sometime Savage Dragon guest star The Super-Patriot. In the other installment of this issue, we find Chapel involved in a Liefeld/Lee story that delves into Chapel's past, with a slant towards the future. The tale unfolds to provide us readers information leading into future events in *Spawn* and the imminent *Youngblood* mini-series. This kick-off comic comes with your basic Youngblood double-cover, one each by Mssrs. Liefeld and Lee. So get ready for four issues of solo fun with the Youngblood gang!

Spider-Man Unlimited #1

Artist: Ron Lim
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Release Date: March 30th
Cover Price: $3.95

What?! Another Spider-Man title? Are those guys at Marvel wacko?! Hold onto your hats, kids. This new Spidey title isn't another monthly, it's a quarterly. (That means it's published four times a year, for you vocabulary lame-os.) Our pals at Marvel sure know how to blast a new title off! *Spider-Man Unlimited* #1 is the first portion of a 14-part crossover, coursing through all four Spider-Man monthlies, culminating in *Spider-Man Unlimited* #2. What earth-shattering events could be so massive, so huge, so humongous, that it takes 14 comics to untold it? No, it's not the Spider Gauntlet, The Spider War, or Peter Parker and The Spider Watch, but "Maximum Carnage"! Yes, eager believer, this is the return of that relentless, psychotic villain—Carnage! This is the other villain you sick Marvel pups clamor for, but fret none, you violence-craving sickos, Venom, your other pal, is along for the ride! Carnage, last dead at the conclusion of *Amazing Spider-Man* #363, is going to have a rebirth of sorts in the pages of *Unlimited* #1. As if all this great stuff wasn't enough, Silver Surfer and Infinity everything artist Ron Lim will be penciling this certain rack-burner.

MORE PICKS

Aliens: Colonial Marines #3
DARK HORSE: While just trying to keep himself and his bunch o' Colonial Marines alive, Lt. Henry discovers a most heinous plot to mutate men into Aliens! **$2.50**

Amazing Spider-Man #377
MARVEL: Spidey teams up with Cardiac to defeat Styx & Stone! **$1.25**

Animal Man #59
DC COMICS: "Recreation," part 3 of 3; Ellen, Animal Man's wife, is arrested and is looking at some hard time for drug possession and prostitution! **$1.75**

Archer & Armstrong #11
VALIANT: The guys keep heading for Los Angeles to get back Armstrong's pouch, but the Sect is waiting for them. **$2.50**

Bloodshot #5
VALIANT: Bloodshot has his hands full against...don't know. Rai has his own problems in the year 4002. **$2.25**

Darker Image #3
IMAGE: Rob Liefeld's Bloodwulf heads to a planet full of pregnant men! Sam Keith's The Maxx roams around the Australian Outback, or does he? Jim Lee's Deathblow heads off to kill Saddam Hussein! Hurray! **$1.95**

Darkhold #8
MARVEL: "Betrayal," part 1 of 3. In this issue, Sam tries to get all the Darkhold pages at once, and one of the Redeemers betrays the rest. **$1.75**

Death: High Cost Of Living #3
DC COMICS: Death loses her magical ankh! Her life is in jeopardy when she's imprisoned with Sexton and the corpse of Theo, by Eremite. **$1.95**

Dinosaurs For Hire #2
MALIBU: The Dinosaurs take on Revenue at the Los Angeles Licensing Show. Plus a back-up story on the back (where else?), featuring Dinosaurs 2099. **$1.95**

Guardians of the Galaxy #36

Hellstorm #2

Amazing Spider-Man #377

Death: High Cost of Living #3

Doom 2099 #5
MARVEL: Doom confronts Fever in Cyberspace, and he confronts some of his old foes, but he's in VR, so does he or doesn't he? **$1.25**

Enigma #3
DC COMICS: Michael continues to hunt down the writer and artist of the old Enigma comic-book series. Plus, see the next comic character to come to life—Envelope Girl! Yay. **$2.50**

Eternal Warrior #11
VALIANT: Gilad faces a scary part of being immortal. He must watch his terminally ill friend die. All he can do is fulfill his final request in "A Gift Before Dying." **$2.25**

Excalibur #65
MARVEL: "Cloud Nine" draws to a close with the Dark Phoenix still looming over Excalibur. **$1.75**

Ghost Rider #37
MARVEL: Heart Attack and the Firm Agents have their hearts set on capturing the Ghost Rider! Let's wish 'em luck, kids! **$1.75**

Grendel: War Child #8
DARK HORSE: Grendel and the rebels hunt down Jupiter after he's kidnapped. Featuring a surprise appearance by "Milk" of "Milk & Cheese." What...no crackers? **$2.50**

Guardians Of The Galaxy # 36
MARVEL: The Guardians Of The Galaxy team up with the Galactic Guardians to take on Dormammu, and someone dies! **$1.25**

H.A.R.D.Corps
VALIANT: A woman joins the team as they battle against the evil Spider Aliens! **$2.25**

Harbinger #18
VALIANT: Peter and kids side up in a war between Harada and an ex-Eggbreaker named Screen. Who do you root for? **$2.50**

MORE PICKS

The Maxx #1

Resurrection #3

HELLSTORM #2
MARVEL: Hellstorm's past becomes more convoluted, and he has to deal with Dr. Strange. **$2.00**

ICON #1
MILESTONE: A marooned alien disguises itself as an African-American lawyer. Young Raquel Ervin convinces him to become the protector of Dakota: thus Icon is born. **$2.95**

INVADERS #1
MARVEL: A re-introduction of Captain America, the Sub-Mariner, and the Human Torch. They take on a bunch of superheroes gone Nazi! **$1.75**

KID ETERNITY #1
DC COMICS: A new series starring a young boy who can raise dead souls, and who happens to be dead himself. He decides to elevate mankind to its next evolutionary platform. And not a moment too soon! **$1.95**

LOBO: PORTRAIT OF A VICTIM #1
DC COMICS: After John Doe gets beat up, he lies in a hospital bed awaiting his insurance investigator. What a surprise when it turns out to be the Main Man! **$1.75**

MAGNUS #25
VALIANT: Magnus wears some flashy new armor in his fight against the incessant Malev. **$2.95**

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #127
MARVEL: Wolverine and the Courier battle a helicarrier full of S.H.I.E.L.D. agents. What more could you ask for? **$1.50**

THE MAXX #1
IMAGE: Finally the Maxx gets his own book. He gets off to a good start killing lots of bad guys in New York, while still visiting Australia in his head. **$1.95**

PREDATOR: RACE WAR #2
DARK HORSE: Cross goes undercover into Paloverde State Penitentiary, and the Predator claims its first victim. **$2.50**

PUNISHER #78
MARVEL: "Survive!" part 2 of 3. The big P is stranded, gunless, on the tundra. His only fight is with himself and the elements. **$1.25**

PUNISHER 2099 #4
MARVEL: A strange group begins mimicking past Marvel superheroes, and the Cyber Nostra steps in! (God Bless America!) **$1.25**

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #54
MARVEL: "Hyper," part 1 of 3. The Punisher battles some hicks who have gotten some interesting powers by doing PCP! Lovely anti-drug message. **$1.75**

RAI & THE FUTURE FORCE #10
VALIANT: Rai goes up against the Malev Emperor! Does this issue herald the end of Rising Spirit? Find out! **$2.25**

RAVAGE 2099 #6
MARVEL: Ravage's body chemistry is altered. Will he survive, and is this the only transformation he'll undergo? **$1.25**

REN & STIMPY #6
MARVEL: Spider-Man guest stars as an evil guy turns Powdered Toast Man into into a "cereal" killer. (Hey, I didn't write it!) **$1.75**

RESURRECTION #3
MARVEL: Part 3 of 4. Warlock and the Infinity Watch find the soul of Shalla Bal in the clutches of Mephisto. But when they try to free her, his hold over her is only strengthened! **$2.50**

SHADOWMAN #14
VALIANT: Jack tries to run from Shadowman, but he IS Shadowman! **$2.50**

SILVER SURFER #80
MARVEL: Introducing Ganymede! Is she good or evil? No one knows. Morg returns to bat fists with Terrax, and that's when Ganymede arises ready for action. **$1.25**

Solar, Man of the Atom #22

Spawn #11

MORE PICKS

SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #22
VALIANT: "Afraid Of The Darque," part 2. Solar decides to take mankind's future into his own hands just like Master Darque wants to! Who will win? **$2.25**

SPAWN #11
IMAGE: Spawn takes on plenty o' ruffians when they try to roust out some bums. **$1.95**

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #200
MARVEL: The return of the Green Goblin and the death of an as-yet-unnamed character!(Marvel won't let the cat out of bag, sorry.) **$2.95**

SPECTRE #6
DC COMICS: Amy challenges the Spectre to try and prevent murders instead of simply avenging them. Not an easy task even for the powerful Spectre. **$1.75**

SPIDER-MAN #34
MARVEL: "Vengeance," part 3 of 3. Spidey and the Punisher take on the Master of Vengeance. **$1.75**

SPIDER-MAN 2099 #7
MARVEL: The future version of the Vulture is causing trouble. If it's the same guy, he'd be...3,178 by then! **$1.25**

SPIDER-MAN CLASSICS #2
MARVEL: Reprints *Amazing Spider-Man* #1! The only way to own it without selling your parents! **$1.25**

STORMWATCH #2
IMAGE: Kilgore is after the team, and Batalion is number one on his hit list! **$1.95**

TRIBE #1
IMAGE: A new team led by Murdock Ellison, a.k.a. Blindspot, with Shift, Hannibal, The Front, Steel Pulse, Fly Girl, Short Order, and Out Cold. That's enough of this tomfoolery! **$2.50**

ULTRAMAN #1
HARVEY: Japan's biggest hero, Ultraman from M-78, comes to comics, fighting the Goudis and trying to keep from stepping on us little folks. Featuring a "Virgin" cover, with the logo and text on the polybag. **$2.50**

Spectacular Spider-Man #200

Spider-Man #34

VENOM #4
MARVEL: Another Venom-spawn. This time it's female! Holy commercialism, Batman! **$2.95**

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #100
MARVEL: The conclusion of the Bloodrose/Richard Fisk thingie, and the debut of the spectacular eye sore, the Spider Armor! **$2.95**

WILDSTAR: SKY ZERO #3
IMAGE: The Death Of Wildstar! Yes he kicks the bucket, el es muerto, he has assumed room temperature, er ist kaput! Savage Dragon's in this ish too. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #69
MARVEL: In a tie-in to *Uncanny X-Men* #300, Wolverine heads back to the Savage Land with Rogue to check out Magneto's old base. **$1.75**

X-FACTOR ANNUAL #8
MARVEL: Introducing Charon, who's out for revenge against X-Factor after his parents die. **$2.95**

X-FORCE #22
MARVEL: The Externals attack X-Force to no avail, and Domino and Grizzly hunt down X Force, but are they friends or foes? **$1.25**

X-MEN #20
MARVEL: Cat fight between Jean Grey and Psylocke, while the X-Men get a mysterious visitor who'll have a tremendous effect on Psylocke. **$1.25**

X-MEN ADVENTURES #7
MARVEL: Gambit, Jubilee, and Storm must escape to stop the Genoshan government's abuse of mutants, but Cable shows up with a plan of his own. **$1.25**

X-O MANOWAR #17
VALIANT: Aric's still having trouble adjusting to 20th century life. Get with it, boy! **$2.25**

Venom #4

X-Men Adventures #7

This Month's Number ONES

Comic book collectors place a great deal of importance on the #1 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully and wisely. #1 issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for March. Happy Hunting!

The Blue Lily #1
from Dark Horse

The Invaders #1
from Marvel Comics

The Mighty Magnor #1
from Malibu Comics

ABC Warriors: Khronicles of Khaos Book 1
Fleetway/Quality

The Atom Special #1
DC Comics

Blazing Combat: Vietnam & Korea #1
Apple

The Blue Lily #1
Dark Horse

Cable #1
Marvel

Days of Wrath #1
Apple

Dragon Lines #1
Marvel

Eternity Triple Action #1
Eternity

Forbidden Planet: The Saga of the Krell #1
Innovation

Icon #1
DC/Milestone

The Invaders #1
Marvel

James Bond 007: A Silent Armageddon #1
Dark Horse

Jason Goes to Hell #1
Topps

Kid Eternity #1
DC Comics

Lobo: Portrait of a Victim #1
DC Comics

Mad Dog #1
Marvel

The Maxx #1
Image

Meteor Man #1
Marvel

The Mighty Magnor #1
Malibu

Outlanders Special #1
Dark Horse

Psi-Judge Anderson: Engrams #1
Fleetway/Quality

Robotech: Return to Macross #1
Eternity

The Sam & Max Show #1
Marvel

Sebastian O. #1
DC Comics

Spider-Man Unlimited #1
Marvel

Tribe #1
Image

Ultraman #1
Harvey

Usagi Yojimbo Vol. 2 #1
Mirage

Youngblood: Strike File #1
Image

TOP 100

FEBRUARY - 1993

Here's the list for February... the countdown of the top selling titles sold as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1 Stormwatch #1
2 Spawn #10
3 Darker Image #2
4 Rai & The Future Force #9
5 Pitt #4
6 Venom #3
7 X-Men #19
8 Uncanny X-Men #299
9 Magnus: Robot Fighter #24
10 Wildstar: Sky Zero #2
11 Hellstorm #1
12 Supreme #6
13 Fantastic Four #375
14 Image Swimsuit Special #1
15 X-Force #21
16 Spider-Man 2099 #6
17 Namor the Submariner #37
18 Punisher 2099 #3
19 Wild Thing #1
20 X-Factor #89
21 Wolverine #68
22 Bloodshot #4
23 Amazing Spider-Man #376
24 Hardware #1 (direct)
25 Blood Syndicate #1 (direct)
26 Doom 2099 #4
27 Spider-Man #33
28 Eternal Warrior #10
29 Secret Defenders #2
30 Resurrection #2
31 Simpsons Comics & Stories #1
32 Legionnaires #1
33 X-O Manowar #16
34 She-Hulk #50
35 Solar, Man of the Atom #21
36 Death: The High Cost of Living #2
37 Harbinger #17
38 H.A.R.D.Corps #6
39 Ghost Rider #36
40 Supergirl/Team Luthor Special #1
41 Ravage 2099 #5
42 [illegible] #1
43 Predator: Race War #1
44 Shadowman #13
45 Archer & Armstrong #10
46 Super Soldiers #1
47 Death's Head II #5
48 Sandman Mystery Theatre #1
49 Midnight Sons Unlimited #1
50 Web of Spider-Man #99
51 Incredible Hulk #404
52 Spectacular Spider-Man #199
53 Spirits of Vengeance #9
54 Silver Surfer #79
55 Sandman #48
56 Legends of Dark Knight #44
57 Aliens: Colonial Marines #2
58 Superman Gallery #1
59 Morbius #8
60 Ren & Stimpy #5
61 X-Men Adventures #6
62 Excalibur #64
63 Punisher War Zone #14
64 Batman #491
65 Shadow of the Bat #11
66 Dracula: Vlad the Impaler #1
67 New Warriors #34
68 Iron Man #291
69 Warlock & Infinity Watch #15
70 Thor #461
71 Punisher #77
72 Spider-Man Classics #1
73 Detective Comics #658
74 Punisher War Journal #53
75 Enigma #2
76 Avengers #361
77 MyS-TECH Wars #2
78 Next Men #12
79 Darkhawk #26
80 Dark Horse Comics #7
81 Captain America #414
82 Guardians of the Galaxy #35
83 Marvel Comics Presents #126
84 Marvel Comics Presents #125
85 Justice League America #73
86 Grendel: War Child #7
87 Hardware #1 (newsstand)
88 Blood Syndicate #1 (newsstand)
89 Daredevil #315
90 Silver Sable #11
91 Punisher Armory #6
92 Ray Bradbury Comics #1
93 Batman Adventures #7
94 Nightstalkers #6
95 What If? #48
96 Avengers West Coast #93
97 New Titans #96
98 Darkman #1
99 Codename: Genetix #4
100 Incomplete Death's Head #4

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	3 (+2)	25 (-2)	57 (-1)
DC Comics	(+0)	6 (—)	18 (-6)
Image	5 (+1)	7 (+2)	7 (+2)
Valiant	2 (+2)	10 (+2)	10 (+1)
Dark Horse	(+0)	1 (+0)	5 (—)
Welsh Pub.	(+0)	1 (—)	1 (+1)
Topps	(+0)	(—)	2 (—)

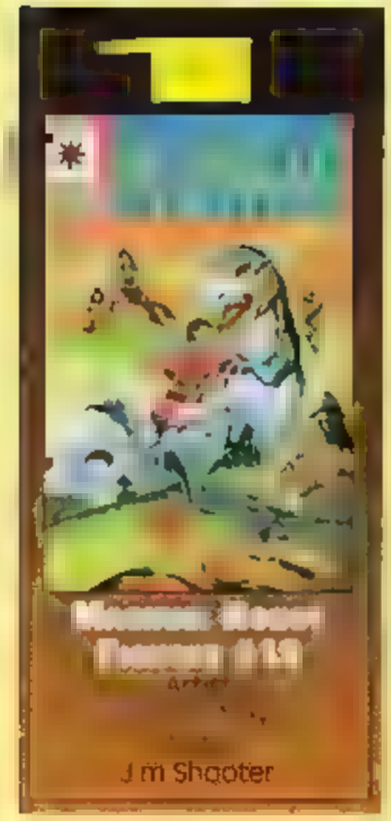
(+/-) indicates change from last month's listing

TOP 10 FEBRUARY 1992

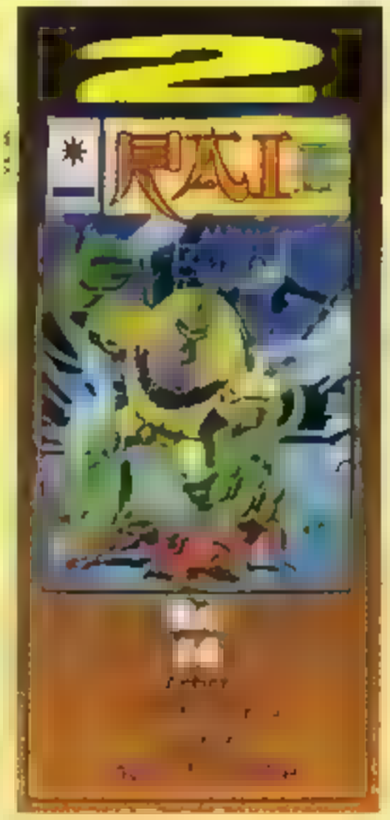
1 X-Men #7
2 Uncanny X-Men #267
3 X-Force #9
4 Cage #1
5 Spider-Man #21
6 Youngblood #1
7 Punisher War Zone #2
8 Marvel Comics Presents #103
9 Wolverine #53
10 X-Factor #[illegible]

TOP 10 MARCH - 1993

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books changing hands throughout the country. Here are the 10 best-selling comics.

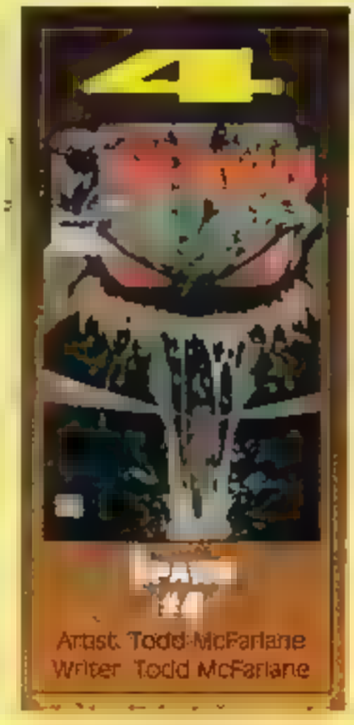


Two months straight as the #1 hottest book. So aside from the cute dinos on the cover, why is this book greasing the palms of dealers on a national level? Three words: Bart-Sears-Turok. No, Bart didn't draw this issue, but this is the first Valiant appearance of Turok, ex son of stone and current Dinosaur Hunter. The fact that he's getting his own ongoing series in the next couple of months helps a lot (news flash: the cover of *Turok Dinosaur Hunter* #1 will have a cover similar cover to *Bloodshot* #1, but will feature a prismatic border around the chromium center shot)...where was I? Ah, the recent Bart Sears-rendered Turok in the pages of *X-O Manowar* has sent fans into a frenzy, and the first story arc in Turok will feature Sears art, making this, his first appearance, all the hotter.



A truly rare collectors item, *Rai* #4 is a rarity in more ways than one. As opposed to other low-print-run books that have heavier price tags than their normal-run counterparts, like the original series *Silver Surfer* #4 (must be the number "4"), this book has no real redeeming value. Now don't go buggy on me, I'm not saying the book sucks, the story is decent and the art is pretty cool, just that the only reason it's up here is because of its low print run, not due to any major storyline upheavals, character introductions or artist/writer debuts. Is it me, or is that kind of weird? I mean, really, is that any reason to drive a book's value up to almost $100? Whether it's right or not, it's happened here and dealers are having no problem selling this super-hot book.

What was that I was saying? *Rai* #3 has the same deal going as *Rai* #4, though there's more of this issue than the other. Again, nothing sizzling as far as content goes. The fact that this book has gone through the roof price-wise as a direct result of its limited print is indisputable, but fans/investors who attempted to collect and own a set of all the issues in Valiant's small stable of titles had a strong hand in it as well. What will probably happen is that, since Valiant pulled a slick one and continued the *Rai* series (even after Rai got roasted by Erica Pierce in the pages of *Unity*), now entitled *Rai and the Future Force*, interest will remain high in the back issues, although it might be normally dulled by the cancellation of a series.



Four books so far here in the top ten and still no sign of Mar...Holy Crap! Only one book on this whole friggen list is Marvel, and it's *Ren & Stimpy*. Boy, Image and Valiant are really kicking butt. What makes this book so hot is the inclusion of one o' them redeemable coupon things that, when combined with the other seven coupon books and sent to Image, got you a copy of *Image Comics* #0. The fact that it's drawn by the hottest artist in the biz right now doesn't hurt, and *Spawn* being the closest thing to a monthly book that Image has keeps the fans happy and supportive of Todd. Throw in the recent writing stints of Neil Gaiman, Dave Sim and Frank Miller, and you have one hell of a hot series in *Spawn*

Isn't this the book where all the heroes from the New Universe line of books deal with the after effects of Starbrand blowing up Pittsburgh? No? My mistake. Let's see, this book deals with a huge hulki...no, that would be a bad choice of words. Hmm, okay, we'll go with beefy. Okay, so this big beefy alien guy murders a young alien kid, has the child's mind imprinted on to his own and this new "kid-in-the-body-of-beefy-bad-ass" escapes to Earth and attempts to fit in with us normal folk, only to be relentlessly hunted by interstellar bounty hunters. Neat concept, and one that fans have welcomed with open arms (and wallets). Dale Keown helps center the spotlight as he brings his enormous fan following to the project as well.

Ten bucks says that every single *Wizard* reader just went through a collective double take with this entry here in the top ten. If you look at this book now and feel that it's nothing more than a joke, that's the mentality that led to it showing up here in the charts. Dealers viewed this as a "quick dump" issue, and ordered conservatively. Well, they did sell quickly, but the demand for the sickly chihuahua and the bloated feline didn't fade like most other TV/movie based projects, but grew as word of this book's existence hit the outside world, where legions of Ren & Stimpy fans ate this thing up quicker than Gritty Kitty-coated nose goblins. And before you ask, no, there's no difference between the Ren and the Stimpy air de-fresheners.

If you havn't read Wizard News yet, go and read it. I'll wait here. Hmmm....hey, S'mores, mmmm. Oh, you're back. Okay, y'see that thing where Valiant and Image are teaming up to do that crossover thing? Well, that entire series is based upon events that take place in this book. Here I thought continuity was dead in comics. Anyway, Solar, distraught after the death of his main squeeze Gayle splits into two separate beings, one of which meets up with Void of WildC.A.T.s fame, and the subsequent "melding" of energies causes the formation of the Val-mage(?) universe. This issue also lays the groundwork for the entire Valiant Universe which showcases, among other things, the last stands of several Valiant biggies.

Master Darque, easily the most unpleasant individual in the Valiant Universe—well actually the second most. The most unpleasant has to go to the spider alien eating the chick on the cover to *Solar* #16. Eeeyuchh! But, running true to form, I've kinda deviated from the book in question. So, as I was saying, Master Darque has definitely made a big impression with the fans, as he's made life miserable for The Eternal Warrior and Shadowman. Wielding incredible dark voodoo powers, Darque has picked up where Erica Pierce left off and is a heck of a lot more popular to boot, and all his nastiness started here in *Shadowman* #8, where M.D. made his comic book debut.

So why is this book sitting here in the charts for two months straight? Well, it all has to do with this being one of the final installments of the "Panic in the Sky" storyline. At the end of this so-so series, Brainiac, the heavy of the series, attempts to have the last laugh and launches a mysterious sphere into space (presumably towards Earth), where absolutely nothing happened. Then, oh, a year or so later, a critter by the name of Doomsday crawls up from out of a containment sphere and makes history (and the 11 o'clock news) by killing Superman! Is this book, *Superman* #66, the first "appearance", or at least the origin of where Doomsday came from? If so, the cover's awfully appropriate, don't ya think?

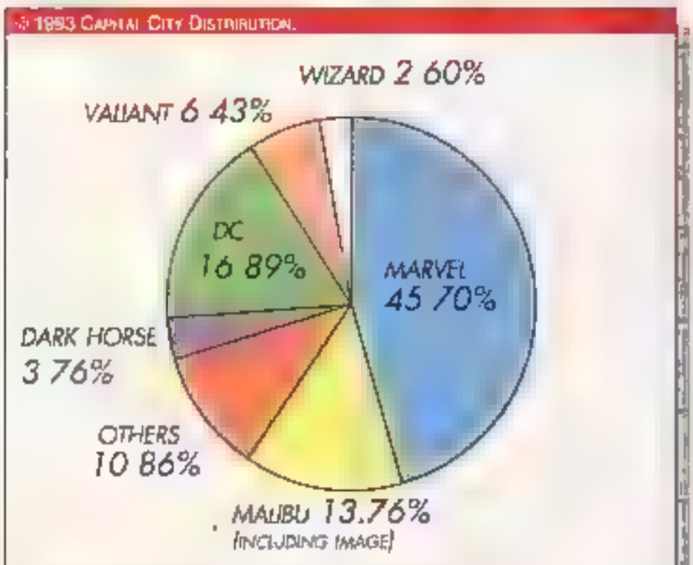
Getting that double-take deja vu? Yeah, me too. So what's the deal with this book (who's Welsh Publishing?) being in the charts? Hey, it's the Simpsons, man. For the longest time, fans have been clamoring for a *Simpsons* comic, and now they got one. Though Matt Groening didn't handle the artistic/writing chores, the comic is faithful to the hit Fox TV show 100 percent (well, maybe a little toned down, but still a really good read). Though this book was ordered heavier than the *Ren & Stimpy* book that's similar in nature, there's no question that the Simpsons are better known in and outside the comic medium. Their strong fan following made this book a cinch for the top ten charts, so there you go. ☆

Wizard Market Watch

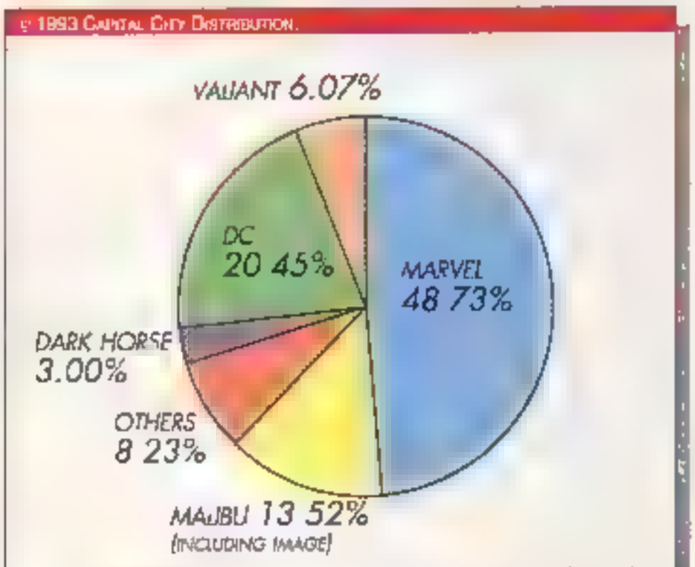
● A little more action in the Marvel back issue bins this month. Though it may have something to do with certain Valiant and Image books pricing themselves out of the reach of some collectors, the hotter books on the Marvel skillet consist of the early appearances of their new up-and-coming characters. Two of the more inexpensive hot picks are *X-Men* #4-5, which feature the respective first appearances of Omega Red and Maverick. Slightly more expensive picks include *New Mutants* #98, the first appearance of the soon to star-in-his-own-mini-series Deadpool, and *Amazing Spideys* #300 and #315-317, which feature the first four appearances of Venom, whose popularity will continue to grow as he's now a Marvel anti-hero, and will star in a succession of mini-series. For those of you with some serious bucks that you're itchin' to spend, tackle *Iron Fist* #14, the first appearance of Wolverine arch-foe Sabretooth. That character's current surge in popularity can be attributed to his upcoming four-issue limited-series (guest starring Wolverine), and persistent rumors that Sabretooth will be joining the X-Men sometime this fall. If that happens, expect this book to go berserk. Other hot books from the Marvel boys are almost exclusively Silver Age, with early *Spider-Man*, *Avengers* and (Uncanny) *X-Men* #1 being the heavies.

● As for Image, none of their books took any jumps this month, but they are consistently some of the best-selling books when they premiere, and are some of the best-selling back issues when it comes to the aftermarket. Three stumbling blocks may appear in Image's near future as far as aftermarket value to some of their titles are concerned. First is the counterfeiting of the *Image* #0 coupons, which we talked about last month. Another possible problem that the couponed Image books may run into is the value of the issues involved after the coupon expiration date. Some of these books went higher than normal because of these coupons, so what happens after the coupons become null and void? Some dealers feel that the amount of books "damaged" by the removal of the coupons will drastically decrease the amount of "mint" coupon books available, thus keeping their price tags right where they are. Also troubling the Image image is the fact that only 25 of 53 issues solicited to date have actually been published and distributed.

● Speaking of Image, the Valiant/Image crossover previewed in Wizard News will undoubtedly be the



▶ *Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for January, according to Capital City Distribution* ◀



▶ *Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for January, according to Capital City Distribution* ◀

single biggest event of 1993. This event will cement Valiant and Image as mainstream comic books in the minds of the fans, and will be chock full of the fun that seems lacking from the business minded big two. As for what's happening right now, the majority of Valiant titles are experiencing unbelievable popularity, with almost all the titles seeing price hikes. Leading the pack are the ultra rare *Rai* #3-4, which have two of the lowest print runs in Valiant's history. These are predicted to climb well over the $100 mark in the coming months. Other hot spots from the big V come in the form of early back issues of *Magnus: Robot Fighter*, *Solar*, *Shadowman*, *Harbinger* and *X-O Manowar*. The only down side to Valiant's current reign as back-issue kings are the semi-stagnant *Archer & Armstrong*, and the price drop of *Bloodshot* #1, Valiant's chromium-covered super-(over?) hyped issue. Though the price did drop on *Bloodshot*, it remains one of Valiant's more popular new-issue sellers, and once it more firmly establishes at its new lower guide value, expect it to start its climb up the charts.

● So what is DC up to? The biggest news from the Warner boys comes in the form of their non-DC titles. Their mature-oriented Vertigo line is extremely popular with the older audience that's sick of the standard superhero stuff. Retailers shoulds take care with how they order some of the Vertigo product, like *Death: The High Cost of Living*, which some dealers over ordered and are now stuck with. Milestone Media, the "culturally diverse" line of books being published by DC Comics, may end up as the sleeper surprise of the year. The books offer characters that are honest to God original, believable, breathing individuals, and the comics being offered are intelligently written without losing the high action that comics need to sell these days. The entire Milestone line has the potential to become a heavy hitter in the marketplace, as long as today's audience can open its mind and give these new books a chance. And Superman? Though his death has cooled off a bit, the excitement surrounding the new Supermen is pretty high. Expect it to do well, at least for a while.

● Dark Horse is gearing up to enter the superhero war. Known mostly for their licensed movie based comics (*Aliens*, *Predator*), their entry into the superhero schtick looks promising indeed. With Dark Horse's rep of producing top-of-the-line product, and the list of creators behind the project reading like a who's who in the comic industry, this project, Comics' Greatest World, promises to be a major event of '93 (and a good read). Current Dark Horse books that exist in the here and now that are doing well are the *Grendel*, *War Child* and *Aliens: Colonial Marines* limited series.

● Malibu, the ex-publisher or Image Comics, has managed to stay in the spotlight even after it was thought that they would fade from the scene after the Image split. Quite contrary to this, Malibu has geared up in the outside toy market (with T.C.A. toy manufacturer) with their Protectors line of toys and accessories like the foam-shooting guns, crossbows, wrist launchers, etc. A clothing line is expected later this year. *Dinosaurs For Hire*, which may show up as a cartoon series and a toy line, may turn out to be a major property in '93. Keep an eye on this one. ★

ATTENTION DEALERS

Our price guide database is being revamped to expand dealer input and speed compiling. Participating dealers who complete our monthly survey forms (perhaps 10 minutes of your time), will recieve a copy of the results, compiled in a participating-dealers ONLY newsletter which you'll get faster and earlier than any other top-selling titles and back issues pricing info anywhere. We are also programming regional information. To participate, write or fax, on letterhead, to DEALER NEWSLETTER, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey NY 10952-8001. Fax 914-426-8071

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. TODD McFARLANE
Spawn

2. JIM LEE
WildC.A.T.s

3. ROB LIEFELD
Youngblood, Youngblood Strike File

4. JAE LEE
Namor, Youngblood Strike File

5. DALE KEOWN
Pitt

6. SAM KIETH
The Maxx

7. BART SEARS
X-O Man. war, upcoming Turok, Spawn

8. JOE QUESADA
X-Factor, Crucible

9. MARK BAGLEY
Amazing Spider-Man, Venom

10. RON LIM
Silver Surfer, Spider-Man Unlimited

WIZARD PRICE GUIDE

About The Price Guide

Compiled in the following Comic Book Price Guide is the most accurate listing for comic books available in the market today. For the most up-to-the-minute values, we are constantly in touch with store owners and show dealers while Wizard "scouts" are checking prices incognito in stores throughout the country. All values listed in this guide are for comic books in Near Mint condition. Keep in mind that this is only a guide and prices may vary depending upon the location of the comic book dealer, availability of a title and its current popularity. All values are subject to change depending on market conditions.

How To Use This Price Guide

When a book has changed in value since last month's listing, it is shaded by either a colored bar or a gray bar. If the comic has risen in value, it will have a colored bar. If the comic has lowered in value, it will have a gray bar.

EXAMPLE:

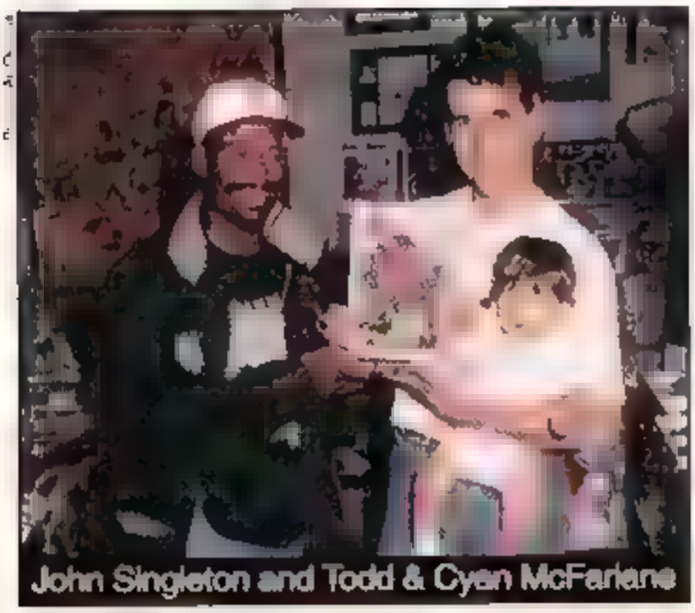
200	3.00
201	3.00
202	4.00
203	4.00
204	3.00
205	3.00
206	3.00
207	3.00
208	3.00
209	2.00
210	2.00
210	3.00
211	3.00

In the example, issues #202 and #203 have risen in value since last month, and issues #209 and #210 have dropped in value. This does not necessarily mean that the comics will continue to rise or drop in the months ahead.

Abbreviations

ARTISTS/WRITERS

AAd	Art Adams
AAu	Adam Austin (Gene Colan)
ABe	Alfred Bester
ABi	Al Bigley
ABl	Adam Blaustein
ABr	Allyn Brodsky
ACo	Amanda Conner
ADa	Alan Davis
ADr	Arnold Drake
AGr	[illegible]
AGo	Adrian [illegible]
AGr	Alan Grant
AHe	Andrew Helfer
AHu	Adam Hughes
AJo	[illegible]
AKb	[illegible]
AKn	[illegible]
AKo	Alexi Kondratiev
AKp	Alan Kupperberg
AKu	Adam Kubert
ALa	Andy Lanning
ALo	Arvin Loudermilk
AMe	Angel Medina
AMi	Al Milgrom
AMo	Alan Moore
ANi	Art Nichols
ANo	Ann Nocenti
APl	Al Plastino
ASa	Alex Saviuk
AS	Art Saaf
ASt	Allen Salvet
ATh	Art Thibert
ATo	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
AW	[illegible]
AWm	Andrew [illegible]
AZe	[illegible]
BAn	Brent Anderson
BAs	Bill Anderson
BBd	Brett Breeding
BBi	Bret Blevins
BBn	Bob Brown
BBo	Brian Bolland
BBr	Barry Blair
BBu	Bob Budiansky
BC	Barry Crain
BD	Buzz Dixon
BD	Bill Draut
BEv	Bill Everett
BEw	Brett Ewins
BGo	Brad Gorby
BGr	Billy Graham
BGu	Butch Guice
BHa	Bob Harras
BHl	Bob Hall
BHo	Bob Hanon
BHo	Brian Hodges
BH	Barry Horne
BHy	Bob Haney
Bja	Bill Jaaska
Bjo	Bruce Jones
BKa	Bob Kane
BKe	Barbara Kesel
Bk	Barry Kitson
BKu	Bill Kunkel
BLa	Bob Layton
Bla	Blackwell
Blu	Bob Lubbers
BMa	Bill Mantlo
BMc	Bob McLeod
BM	Bernie E. Mireault
BMo	Bill Molno
BMu	Brian Murphy
BO	Billy O'Neill
BPe	Brandon Peterson
BPo	Bob Powell
BP	Bruno Premiani
BPu	Brian Pulido
BRa	Barbara Randall
BRe	Bill Reinhold
BRo	Bob Rozakis
BSe	Bart Sears
BS	Bill Sienkiewicz
BSm	Barry Windsor-Smith
BSp	Bill Spangler
BTa	Brian Talbot
BW	Bob Wiacek
BWo	Basil Wolverton
BW	Berni Wrightson
CAp	Craig Anderson
CBa	Cary Bates
CBc	Chris Bachalo
CBk	Carl Banks
CBo	Craig Boldman
CBr	Craig Brasfield
CBu	Cary Burkett
CC	Chris Claremont
CDa	Craig Davidson
CD	Chuck Dixon
CDo	Colleen Doran
CGi	Chris Gillen
CHa	Cully Hamner
Cin	Carmine Infantino
CJo	Christopher Jones
Cka	Carlos Kasero
CKe	Cam Kennedy
CMa	Chris Marrinan
CMr	Cindy Martin
CMo	Christopher Moeller
CMs	Charles Marshall
CPa	Chuck Patton
CPt	Chuck Pfarrer
CPo	Carl Potts
CRu	[illegible]
CSe	Carole Seuling
CSm	Cooper Smith
CSp	Chris Sprouse
CSt	[illegible]
CSw	Curt Swan
CT	Chas Troug
CVe	Charles Vess
CWa	Chris Warner
CWo	Cynthy Wood
CWo	Chris Wozniak
DAb	Dusty Abell
DAd	Dan Adkins
DA	Dan Abnett
DAy	Dick Ayers
DBa	Dan Barry
DBr	Denis Beauvais
DBk	Darryl Banks
DBr	Danie Brereton
DBr	Doc Bright
DBs	Del Barras
DBx	Dougie Braithwaite
DCa	Doug Campbell
DCh	Dan Chichester
DC	David Campiti
DCo	Don Chin
DCo	Dave Cockrum
DCw	Denys Cowan
DDa	David Day
DDi	Dick Dillin
DDy	Dan Day
DF	Danny Fingeroth



John Singleton and Todd & Cyan McFarlane

From left to right: Stan Lee with Spider-Man toy, Bob Kane with Batman toy, and a toyless Will Eisner

DGb Dave Gibbons
DGe Duncan Fegredo
DGi Dick Giordano
DGl Don Glut
DGo Darren Goudhart
DHe Don Heck
DHo Dave Hoover
DHs Dean Hsieh
DJa Dennis Janke
DJu Dan Jurgens
DKe Dale Keown
DK David Klein
DK David Anthony Kraft
DLa Dan Lawlis
DL Diana Light
DMa David Mazzucchelli
DMc Dwayne McDuffy
DMd Dana Moreshead
DMg Don McGregor
DM Dave Michelinie
DMe Dave McKean
DMo Doug Moench
DMr Dennis Marks
DMs Dan Mishkin
DNe Don Newton
DOn Dennis O'Neil
DPe Don Perlin
DRb Darick Robertson
DRd Dan Reed
DRe David Reed
DRo Dave Ross
DSg Dick Sprang
DSh Dave Shwartz
DS Dave Sim
DSm Dave Simons
DSp Dan Spiegle
DS Dave Stevens
DTh Dana Thomas
DTu Dwayne Turner
DVa Dan Vado
DVd Darth Vader
DWe David Wenzel
DW Damson Willich
DZ Dwight Zimmerman
EBa Eduardo Barreto
EBe Edgar Bercasio
EB E. Nelson Bridwell
ECh Ernie Chua
ECo Ernie Colon
EDo Evan Dorkin
EFu ....Elmer Fudd
EHa ....Ed Hannigan
EHt ....Edmond Hamilton
ELa ....Erik Larson
EMl ....Elliot Maggin
EMo ....Esteban Maroto
EPe ....Faye Perozich

ERe Eric Recourt
ESa Eric Saltzgaber
ESh Eric Shanower
ESk Evan Skolnick
ESm E. Silas Smith
ESt Ernie Stinter
FBr Frank Brunner
FCi Frank Cicocco
FFr Frank Frazetta
FHe Franz Henkel
FHy Flint Henry
FLo Frank Lovece
FMi Frank Miller
FN Fabian Nicieza
FRo Frank Robbins
FSp Frank Springer
FTh Frank Thorne
GCo Gary Cohn
GCo Gene Colan
GCp Greg Capullo
GCv Gerry Conway
GDa Geof Darrow
GEn Garth Ennis
GE Gerhard
GEs Gary Erskine
GEv George Evans
GFr [illegible] Frank
GFr George Freeman
GFo Gardner Fox
GF Gary Friedrich
GFx Greg Fox
Gra Graham Ingels
Gis Geof Isherwood
Gjo Gerard Jones
GKa Gil Kane
GKw Gary Kwapisz
GLa Greg LaRocque
GMa Graham Marks
GMi Grant Michin
GMo Grant Morrison
GMr Gray Morrow
GNo Graham Nolan
GPa George Papp
GPe George Perez
GTa Gerry Talaoc
GTu George Tuska
GW Gregory Wright
GYa Guang Yap
HBa Hilary Barta
HCh Howard Chaykin
HE Harlan Ellison
HFl Hugh Fleming
HHa Hugh Harvey
HKa Mark Kanaz
HMa Howard Mackie
HNg Hoang Nguyen
HSh Herb Shapiro

HT Harry Thompson
HWe Howard Weinstein
IEd Ian Edgington
IHo [illegible]
JA [illegible]
JA [illegible]
JAp Jim Aparo
JA John Arcudi
JAs Jay Allen Sanford
JBa Jim Baikie
JBg Jon Bogdanove
JBi Jerry Bingham
JBo John Bolton
JB June Brigman
JB1 Jeff Butler
JBu John Buscema
JBy John Byrne
JB. Joe Brozowsky
JCa Joey Cavalieri
JCh Johnny Childish
JC John Cassell
JCm John Cassaday
JCn John Calnan
JC John Craig
JDb [illegible]
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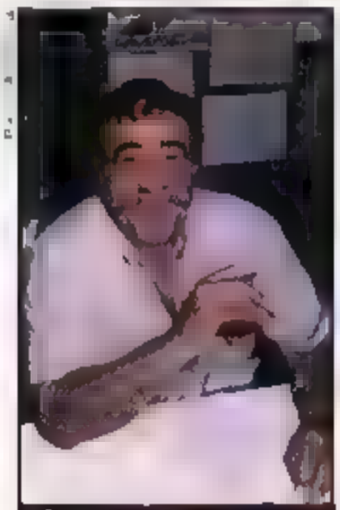
JDm [illegible]
JDr [illegible]
JD [illegible]
JDs [illegible]
JDu [illegible]



Sergio Aragones

JFa Jim Fern
JFo John Forte
JF James Fry II
JGa Jay Gavin (Werner Roth)
JG Jeff Grubb
JGu Jackson Guice
JHa Jack C. Harris
JHe Jamie Hewlett
JH John Higgins
JHo John Holland
JHu James Hundall
JJB J.J. Birch
JJo Jeff Johnson
JJu Joe Justko
JK Jack Kirby
JKu Joe Kubert
JLe Jim Lee
JL Joseph Michael Linsner
JLo Jeph Loeb
JLu Jose Luis Garcia Lopez
JMc Jim McWeeney
JMe Joseph M. Monks
JMo Jim Mooney
JMu John J. Muth
JNs John Smith
JOd Joe Orlando
JO Jerry Ordway
JOs John Ostrander
JOw Jim Owsley
JOr Juan Ortiz
JPa Joe Paradise
JPe Jonathan Peterson
JPh Joe Phillips
JPi Joe S. Pierro
JPr Jerry Prosser
JPu Jeff Purves
JQu John Quesada
JRa Jordan Raskin
JRb James Robertson
JR John Ridgeway
JR John Romita Jr.
JRo John Romita
JRu Joe Rubinstein
JSu [illegible]
JTC [illegible]
JSe [illegible]
JSg Jerry Siegel
JSh Jim Shooter
JSi Joe Sinnott
JSk Johnny Sikela
JSt Jack Staton
JSm John Statema
JSn James T. Sherman
JSo Joe Staton
JSp Jack Sparling
JSr Jim Sherman
JSt Jim Starlin
JTh Jill Thompson
JTu James Tucker
JVa Jim Valentino
JVa James Van Hise
JWa John Wagner
JWi J. H. Williams
JWo Jason Waltrip
JWr John Waltrip
JZa Jorge Zaffino
JZ Joe [illegible]
KBa [illegible]
KBu [illegible]
KDa [illegible]
KSa [illegible]
KG [illegible]
KHo [illegible]
KHp Kevin Hopgood
KJa Klaus Janson
KJo Kelley Jones
KJv Kirk Javinen
KKe [illegible]
KLa Ken Landgraf
KL Kelly Llewellyn
KMa Kevin Maguire
KMc Kevin McMahon
KNe [illegible]
KOr [illegible]
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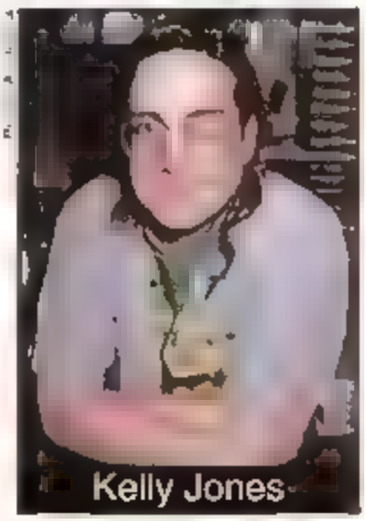

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And best wishes to Michael Mirman, Ruan Fitzmaurice, Adam Schneider, Matt Francis and Michael & Alissa Lynch. Good luck with the club!

ANSWERS

C.B.I.Q.

from pages 94 & 95

1)B	2)A	3)C
4)A	5)D	6)C
7)A	8)C	9)B
10)D	11)D	12)D
13)A	14)C	15)D
16)B	17)D	18)A
19)A	20)C	21)D
22)A	23)D	24)A
25)C	26)B	27)A
28)A	29)B	30)D

Valiant Contest

from Wizard #17

1) Archangel
2) NCC-1701
3) Greedo
4) Avengers
5) Jack Kirby
6) Mechagodzilla
7) Sabretooth

Valiant Code: VOYAGER

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MAY:
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WONDERMAN ANNUAL #2
NAMOR ANNUAL #3
DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #9

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THOR ANNUAL #18
IRON MAN ANNUAL #14
PUNISHER WAR ZONE ANNUAL #1
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #3

JULY:
EXCALIBUR ANNUAL #1
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #13
AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #8
GHOST RIDER ANNUAL #1

AUGUST:
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X-MEN ANNUAL #2
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DEATHLOK ANNUAL #2
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